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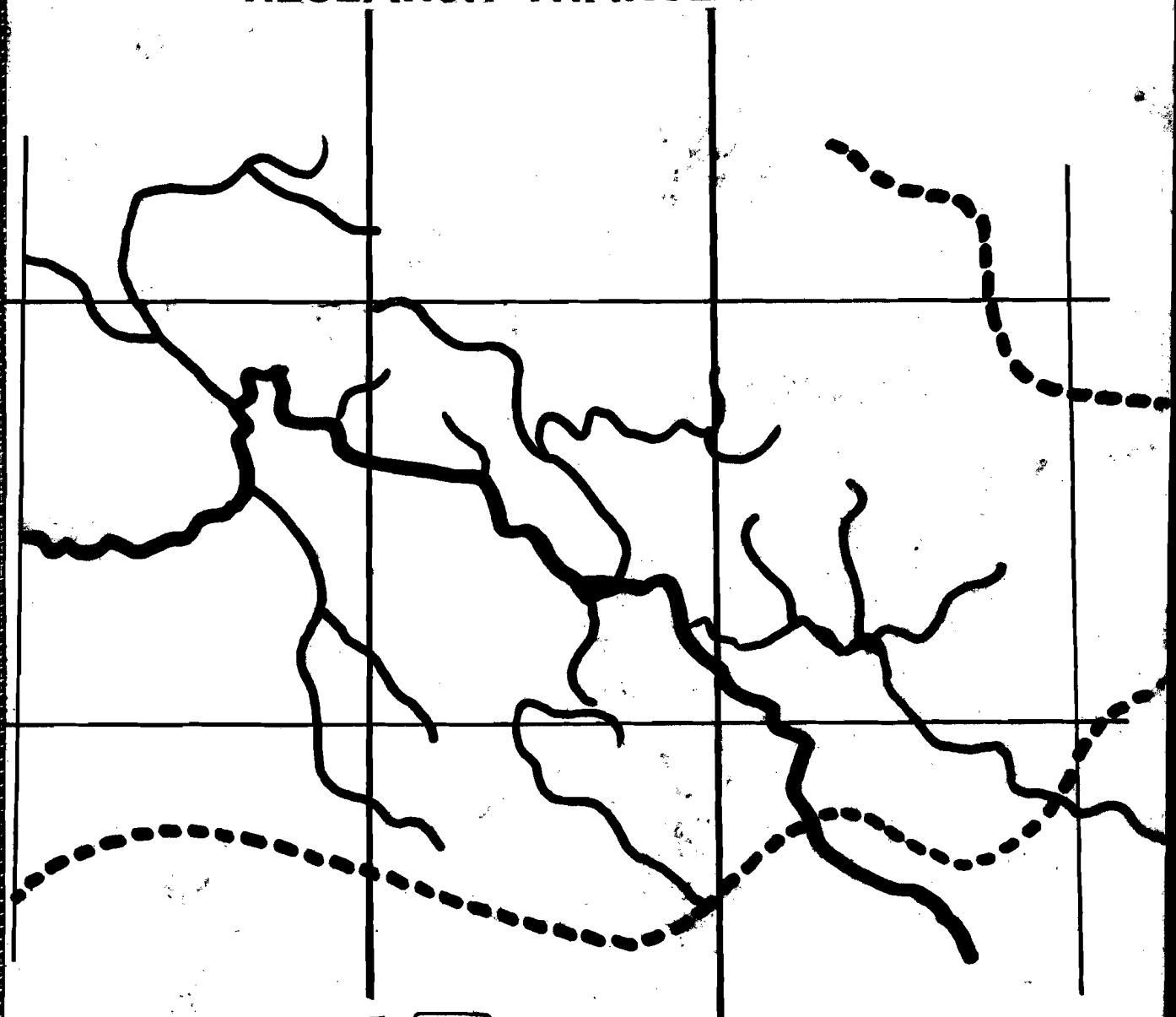

LOK VIRSA

HISTORY OF BALTISTAN

by

Al-Haj Maulvi Hashmatullah Khan

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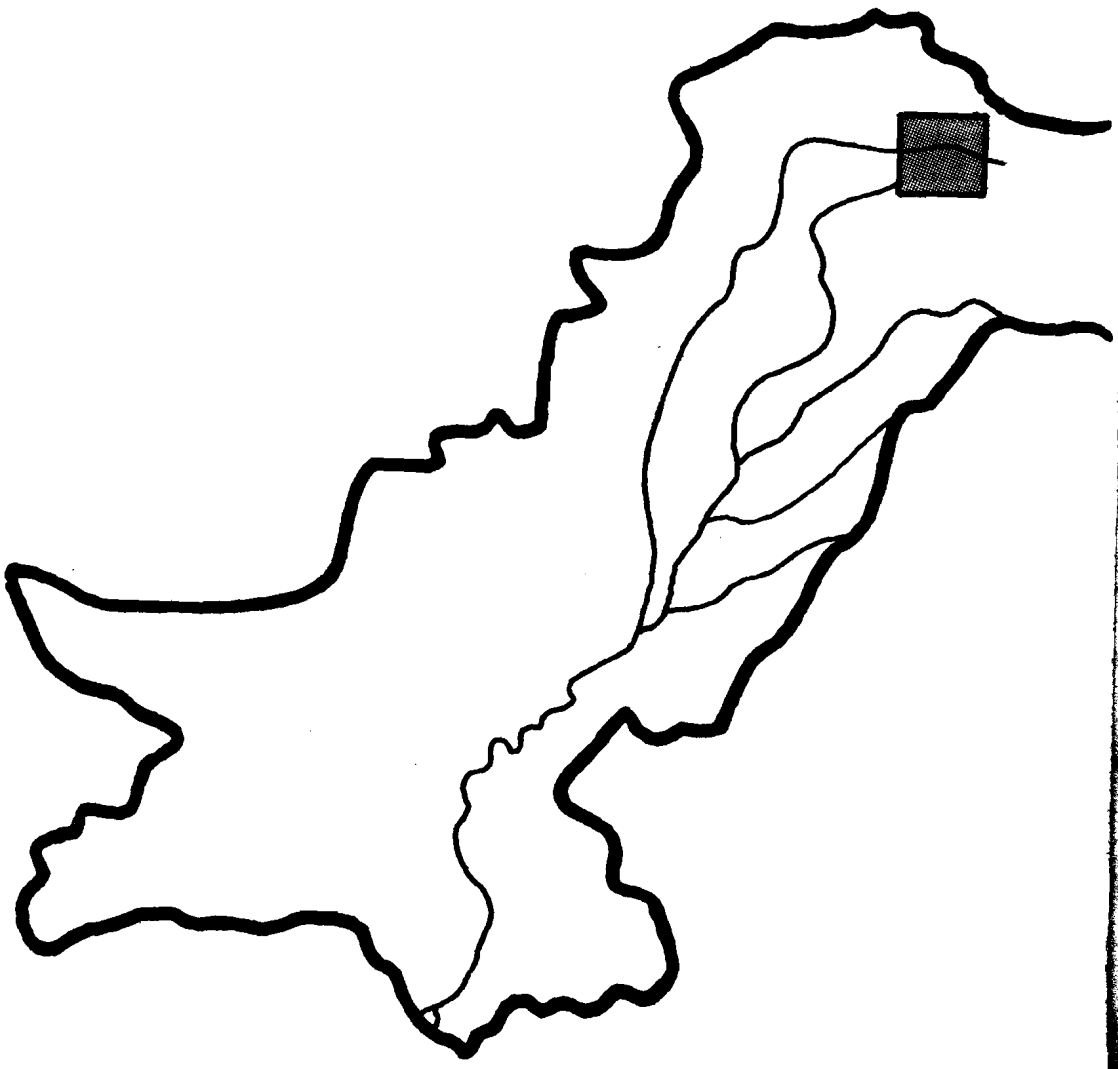
FOREWORD

This is a translation of a history in Urdu by a Muslim scholar, Hashmatullah Khan, who served the Dogra regime as the Wazir-i-Wazarat (Administrator) of Baltistan. Written in 1939, this history is the only one available on Baltistan. The only major written record upon which the writer bases his history is the Shigar-Namah, a handwritten Persian manuscript found in the Shigar valley. He has freely used folk poetry, epics and other oral traditions to fill gaps in the history, thus showing the great importance of oral history to corroborate and supplement written sources. As such, it is a good example of Islamic scholarship in Urdu.

As the author was in the service of the Dogra regime, his account of that period is necessarily prejuidiced. There is still a need for a history of the oppression that the people of Baltistan suffered under Dogra rule. A young Balti writer, Yusuf Hussainabadi, has recently given a graphic account of the freedom struggle of the people of the Northern Areas against Dogra tyranny, but a more detailed account of that period is necessary. Nevertheless, this history contains descriptions of rituals, material culture and folk traditions of Baltistan. The description of wars between the rulers of different valleys provide profiles of cunning and subterfuge, but also courage, sagacity and a desire to solve matters peacefully.

Lok Virsa offers this translation as a reference material to National and foreign scholars and researchers. A final annotated and supplemented version of this translation will eventually appear in book form. Lok Virsa does not necessarily share the author's opinion.

Lok Virsa



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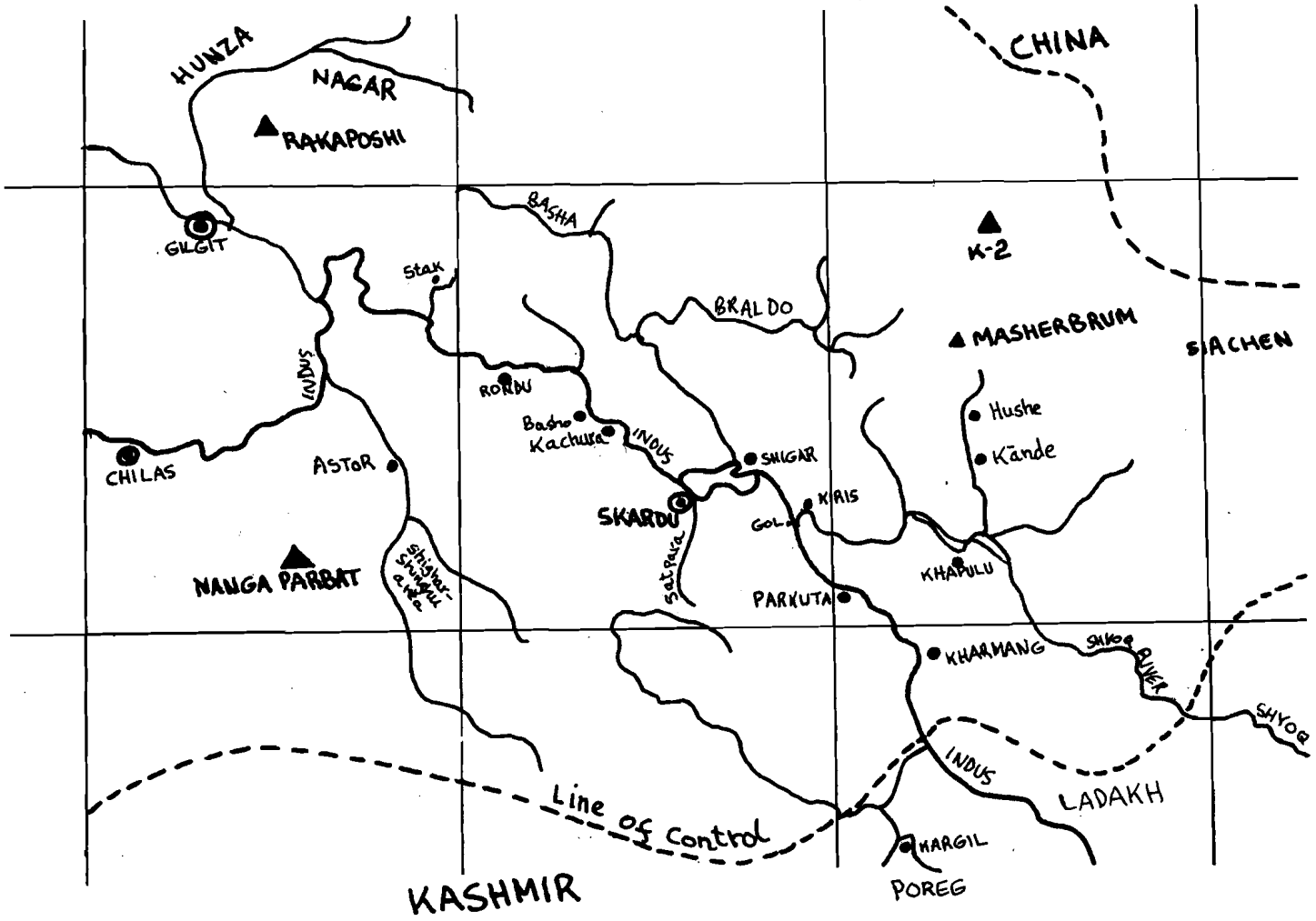
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INDUS
LADAKH
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HISTORY OF BALTISTAN

Introduction

I was unable to find a basic history of Little Tibet (i.e., Baltistan); out of necessity, therefore, I had to lay the foundations on the folksongs, common customs and antiquities of the area. Apart from these, relevant source material pertaining to Baltistan from the histories of other areas, but supportive of local legends has been integrated into this work. In some places, large portions have been copied from books to provide greater detail.

This work has seven chapters. The first chapter deals with early times and the history of the Maqpon dynasty in Skardu. The families ruling Rondu and Astor are branches of this dynasty and since they have not done anything of importance, I have only included their genealogies. Similarly, the house of Kartakhshah is also a branch of the Maqpon dynasty, but since their history concerns another part of the country, they have been dealt with in greater detail in the second chapter. The House of Tolti is a branch of the Kartakhshah house, and their genealogy has accordingly been included in the description of Kartakhshah.

The incidents occurring during the time of Adam Khan, Shah Murad, Sher Shah and Rafi Khan were found by me in a Persian manuscript entitled "Shigar Namah". However, as this manuscript has been written in the tradition of the Shah Namah and the Sikandar Namah in the epic style, no attention has been given to the chronological sequence of events. Nevertheless, the information contained in the book is very valuable from an historical viewpoint. I have therefore included a summary of the manuscript. This summary provides a fascinating account of the warfare of that time and will not prove uninteresting.

The duration of reign of various rulers has been determined through several sources, but all dates before Ghotachusinge have been fixed arbitrarily, allocating thirty years of reign to each ruler. This scale has been selected only after a detailed survey of the period in question. Similarly, the House of Kartakhshah has been dated approximately, with modifications where source material was available.

The third chapter deals with the Amacha house of Shigar, the early history of which exists only in folk legends. The first eighteen generations of the given genealogy seem spurious to me and I have rejected them. A verification was possible only after the nineteenth generation. The history of other neighbouring ruling families corroborates the genealogy from the time of Ghazi Tham onwards. His house includes the mighty Imam Quli Khan, whose feats of daring have been summarized from the Shigar Namah and included in the history of Skardu. A description of his court has also been given.

The fourth chapter deals with the house of Yabgo from Khapulu. Since absolutely no source material other than legends and antiquities is available, I have done my best to make use of them. In his genealogy, the present Raja of Khapulu links himself in the seventieth generation with no less a person than Alexander the Great: this is surely a figment of his imagination. I have prepared a separate and more plausible genealogy of his house, which I do not consider reliable beyond the twenty-eighth generation, events before this time being historically verifiable. The greatest of this house was Raja Hatim Khan, who won fame during his reign by achieving - among other feats - the unification of the territories of Sarlang and Thor till Khar.

The fifth and seventh chapters deal with mixed themes: the administrative systems of past and present regimes have been compared, but the information is based on hearsay and has no historical support. The history of the spread of Islam in the region is complex, for which reason Gilgit has been included in the Islamic period, as the fortunes of Gilgit and Baltistan during this period were inextricably linked.

A census of the area has been included. This research took many years of my life and I had to visit many remote villages of the land. Many people helped me, but the services of Mirza Mohammad Khan Rais Pashkum and Maulavi Mohammad Hussain of Jehlum were invaluable: it was only through their assistance that I was able to compile the folksongs and legends of the land. I thank them humbly for their perseverance and am also grateful to Munshi Mohammad Yaqub Khan for helping me with diverse information.

The following authors and books have aided me in my work, for which they have my gratitude:

1. Mukammal Tarikh-i-Kashmir by Mohammad-al-Din Fauq

2. Tarikh-i-Hindustan by Zakaullah

3. Tarikh-i-azmi Farsi

4.Tahfta-al-Ahbab Farsi

5.Tarikh-i-Rashidi by Mirza Haider Gorgan Farsi (handwritten manuscript).

6.Shigar Namah Farsi

7.Risala-i-Farsi by Raja Ali Sher Khan Kartakhshah

8.Risala-i-Farsi by Maulavi Syed Mohammad Abbas of Chorka

9.Diverse English publications.

Hashmatullah Khan
Gola Ganj
Lucknow
7th September 1936

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY OF SKARDU: THE HOUSE OF MAQPON INCLUDING THE BRANCHES OF RONDU AND ASTOR

I: Early times and the ancient rajas of Skardu

The country now known as Baltistan has been called "Little Tibet" in earlier history. Later on, the same term was used for Ladakh, differentiation being made by calling Baltistan "Little Tibet" and Ladakh "Big Tibet". However, since the language of Ladakh is Maryol and the language of Baltistan is Balti, "Baltistan" is certainly the most suitable name for the land.

At their zenith, the princely states of Baltistan considered Poreg (now called Kargil) to be a part of Baltistan, for which reason no separate mention of Poreg has been found in the historical traditions. These two regions can be roughly classified as follows:

1.Baltistan

a) The region and the administrative area of Skardu is bounded by the confluence of the Indus and Suru Rivers from the Gargara stream on the one side and the central area between Rondu and Gilgit with its related streams on the other.

b) The region along the valley of the Shyoq River from the border at Nubrah in Ladakh on the one side to the confluence of the Shyoq with the Indus and related streams: this is the administrative area of Khapulu.

c) The valley of the Shigar river with the streams of Basha and Braldo form the Shigar region.

2. Poreg

a) The areas of Suru and Kartse lie along the River Suru from the borders of Zanskar upto the border of Pashkam.

b) Dardic Nations:
   i. Dras or the valley of the Dras River.
   ii. Shingo-Shigar or the valleys of the Shingo and Shigar.

c) Pashkum or the area including the valley drained by the Wakha and Paini streams and a part of the Suru valley.

d) Sot, or the region bounded by the Suru River, the boundaries of Pashkum and the Indus valley to the borders of Ladakh.

The history of Poreg will be related elsewhere and this section will deal only with the history of Baltistan.

Baltistan seems to have been settled by the invasion of nationalities that entered either from Gilgit along the Indus valley into Skardu through Hunza, Nagar, the Pamir, Gilgit and Kashghar; into Shigar and Khapulu from Ladakh or vice-versa. We shall now turn to the kingdom of Skardu located in the Indus valley.

The early history of Baltistan's population is difficult to determine. Local songs, customs and antiquities provide traditions concerning ancient times when different people led by individuals came from Gilgit and founded settlements:

1. Gya-lo-shal-bo founded Gol (Gyol)
2. Shakar-gyal-po founded Shakri kalan, Chondah and Byamanqpo
3. Kord-ason-co founded Khar-po
4. Barq-mayor-co founded Barq-naq
5. Lon-che settled the Indus valley below Kachura (Katsura)

These settlements were tribal, the person founding a settelement becoming the chief of the area, a title that continued in his family. With the passage of time, Shakar-gyal-po achieved sovereignty over the other families (with the exception of the Lon-che of Rondu) and extracted taxes from them. The folk songs report that Shakri Kalan became prosperous and soon developed as the permanent capital of the princely house of Shakar-gyal-po.

In those times, a mountain at the Indus broke and fell into the Shakam River at a place between Baghardar and Kachura below Skardu. The debris rose to the level of the surrounding mountains, blocking the water and resulting in a huge lake stretching from Khalsi to Kargil. A boat moored on the banks of the Indus at Skardu floated up to Chonda, where it was tied to a stone. This stone is called "Chen-ardad" (i.e., "stone-for-tying-boat") and is still well-known in the area. While the initial settlements were disturbed by this lake, the receding waters permitted resettlement over a very long period.

It so happened that at one time, the house of Shakar-gyal-po had only one female heir, Shakri. Four well-known young courtiers (Sta-no-tok-tok, Sta-no-ne-She, Sta-no-ka-nai and Sta-no-ba-bor) argued violently as to who should marry her, each one wanting her for his own family. At this moment, a man named Ibrahim appeared from Kashmir. His arrival could have been between 1190 and 1220 AD, but no proof exists for this. This young man was both capable and brave and his fame spread throughout the land in a few days. The four courtiers thereupon decided to give up their quarrel and wedded Shakri with this young man. This traveller thus became the ruler and was given the title of "Maqpon", meaning "leader of the nation".(Tr. note: maqpon is a Tibetan military rank corresponding roughly to "general").

The last ruler of the house of Gyalo-shalbo died without issue and his holding became a part of Shigri. Similarly, the house of Kord-ason was absorbed by Barq-mayor and three families ruled the entire land from Rondu to Shigri peacefully for many years.

From the time of Ibrahim to that of Kho-khard-singe, there is little information concerning the seven-generation span. It is estimated that this period continued from 1220 to 1464 AD. Ghota-cu-singe became the raja of the land after this.

During the reign of Ghotacusinge (1437-1464), Islam began to be propagated at the start of the eighth century Hijra in Kashmir. The most noteworthy of the holy men preaching this religion was Hazrat Syed Ali Hamadani, also known as Amir Kabir.

His son-in-law and student, Syed Mohammad Nur Bakhsh entered Baltistan as his khalifah (Tr. Note: a term

used to denote an "apostle" of a great spiritual leader). While the history of Kashmir mentions him, no date has been given. From a book given to me by a Mullah in Baltistan, I was able to ascertain that he died in 869 AH and entered the land between 840 to 850 AH. Tradition has it that the rulers at that time were Ghotacusinge in Skardu, Ghazi Tham in Shigar and Shah Azam in Khapulu.

Syed Mohammad Nur Bakhsh spread the message of Islam in the name of Hazrat Amir Kabir Syed Ali Hamadani, winning many converts. Ghazi Tham changed his name to Ghazi Mir on conversion. Nur Bakhsh laid the foundations of the Amborak Mosque in Shigar. In Khapulu, Shah Azam laid the foundations of the Jamia Masjid at Chaqpan with his own hands on conversion by the great Syed. This type of mosque contains four-cornered rooms and is locally called Khanaqah.

While it is not known whether Ghotacusinge became a Muslim, Syed Nur Bakhsh was certainly responsible for the spread of Islam in Skardu.

As a large Muslim population exists in Poreg, the religion was apparently spread there by Nur Bakhsh. It is said that this holy man did not stay long in Khapulu and made his way to Yarqand via the Saltoro River.

During the reign of Bahram (1664-1690), Lon-che-adat-co launched an attack on Shigri from Rondu and conquered portions of the former. Bahram's Wazir, Chand-an-ge-ri advised him that it was impossible to win a battle against Lonche Adatco; instead, he could be defeated through cunning. A large ditch was dug at Sandos and covered with sweet-smelling grass and thorn bush, the surrounding earth being levelled to hide it. During the battle, the Maqpon army retreated towards the ditch, skirted it adroitly and dispersed. Lon-che-ada-co came in hot pursuit and fell into the ditch. A man called Sha-po Mohammad Ali was present on the spot and killed Lonche with a club. Lonche's brother gathered the army and fled. He was chased by the Maqpon army till Basho, but they were unable to catch him, though the area from Basho to Shigri was annexed by them.

Bahram died before his son Bokha could be weaned. Taking advantage of this, the Barq-mayor family seized the throne and killed all males of the Maqpon family. Bokha's foster father (the famous Mla-tum-zer-pa) kept him at home, pretending he was "Bokha", meaning "dumb". The Raja of

Kharbokhar, determined to put an end to all traces of the Maqpon family, had the child summoned to put him to death. However, the raja had made the mistake of retaining one of Bahram's wazirs, one Ga-ca. Gaca saw that an innocent child was about to be murdered even though he posed no threat to the raja, and pleaded with the raja for the life of the child, who he alleged could do no harm, thus saving Bokha. Living at the house of his foster-father and working as a shepherd, Bokha pretended to be dumb till the age of 18.

It is related that one day while he was grazing his flock, he came to the stone called Bromnes near the raja's palace and dozed off on the stone. He had forgotten to take food along and his foster-mother took some food and set off to search for him. As she approached the stone, she saw him sleeping on the stone with a serpent coiled in four coils with its hood providing shade to the boy against the sun.(Tr. Note: a hooded cobra providing shade to the child Buddha is a recurring theme in Buddhist mythology). She screamed in fear, causing Bokha to wake up and the snake to dissappear. Bokha complained that she had woken him up from a wonderful dream: he had seen that a large group of followers had dressed him in royal robes and put him on a throne. The woman related the incident to her husband, who surmised that the dream meant that the boy would one day be king. He won the support of Wazir Gaca through a series of intrigues and ploys. Other former followers of Bahram also gave their support. It was eventually planned that the two Barq-mayor-pa brothers would be taken to Bardo on the pretext of partridge-hunting. It was usual that all the people of the state were used as beaters to flush the birds. The hunt used to start in Bardo and end in Qaz-li-yol, where everyone gathered for dancing and singing. Wazir Gaca waid that he would dance the sword-dance and kill the Barq-mayor-pa brothers during the dance. The supporters of Bokha would then swear allegiance to him and his ascent to the throne would be announced publicly.

Everything went according to plan and the people carried Bokha from Qaz-li-yol to Shigri in a palanquin. They set him on the Bromnes stone and honoured him. However, they asked, "we have acknowledged this dumb person as our ruler, but how will he manage the affairs of state?" At this, Bokha's foster-father spoke to him and said, "My son, speak up!", whereupon Bokha began to speak. For this, he received the title "Tam-zir-pa", meaning "one who speaks" and was given the name "Barq-maqpon", meaning "the

Maqpon of the stone". The coronation and investiture of the rajas was henceforth traditionally held on this stone until the time of Raja Ahmad Shah.

BOKHA´S RULE (1490-1515)

On becoming his father´s heir, Bokha also seized the territory of Barq-mayor-pa. In this way, several places held by other families came under the sway of the family of Shigar-gyalpo. Bokha founded the settlement of Skardu."du" in the Balti language means "a flat clearing between high mountains". Skardu is at a higher level than Shigri. The greatest ruler of the family of Bokha was Askar-gyalpo. It can thus be deduced that the name of the town comes from an acronymic combination of "du" and "askar" - "Askardu". (Tr. Note: a speculative etymology. The origins of the name remain obscure).

Construction of Khar-po-che

Bokha moved from Shigri to Skardu after the latter´s settlement. Upon a cliff facing Skardu from the north, he constructed a magnificent fort as his seat. Ths fort he called Khar-po-che, meaning "Great Fort". Bounded by the Indus to the east and north and secured to the west by steep and high cliffs, this fort can be entered only by a narrow winding path leading to it. This makes the fort so secure that it is impossible to visualize its successful storming in ancient times, given that the only weapons available were obsolete muskets. The fort was thus considered impregnable. (Tr. Note: In 1948, freedom fighters used an alternative difficult route and stormed the Dogra garrison in the fort).

Settlers were called in from Kashmir and Chilas to populate Skardu. The descendants of the former settlers from Kashmir are known as Doghani-pa and Kina-pa. Although the settlements were scattered, they grew to form a town with time.

In short, the founder of the kingdom of Skardu was Bokha, the last Buddhist ruler of the area (of the

Buddhist sect of ya-pon-chos). His grandfather Ghotacosinge ruled at the time when Islam becaame known all over the area because of the influence of Syed Nur Bakhsh, but we do not know whether Islam influenced Ghotacosinge directly or not. Tradition has it that Bokha's son Sher Shah accepted Islam under the influence of Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi. An important event during the reign of Bokha was the arrival of Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi in Kashmir from Khorasan in 901 AH. On his arrival, he started proselytising the Shia faith with the co-operation of Baba Ali Bokhar. When Syed Mohammad Madar al-Muham heard of this, he forcibly sent Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi to Skardu.

On reaching Skardu, Mir Shamsuddin became the khalifa of Syed Mohammad Nur Bakhsh and spread the message of his faith. The rulers at that time were the Maqpon Bokha at Skardu, Gazri in Shigar, Rai Bahram in Khapulu and Jeb-co in Poreg.

Mir Mohammad Iraqi was welcome everywhere, as the people were willing to lay down their lives for Syed Nur Bakhsh. He continued to serve religion for five to six years. Approximately in 908 AH, he returned to Kashmir on the death of Syed Mohammad Madar al-Muham.

SHER SHAH (1515-1540)

The Maqpon Bokha was succeeded on his death by his heir Sher Shah, who was a follower of Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi. He spent much time preaching the faith and his reign passed peacefully.

The invasion by Sultan Said Khan Wali (939 AH) apparently occurred during his reign, though the Ta'rikh-i-Rashidi only mentions one Rai Bahram, who is, in my opinion, the Bahram of Khapulu. By time-reckoning, Sher Shah should have been the Raja of Skardu at that time. The sultan possibly did not attack the secure fort and merely destroyed the area around it, for the author Mirza Haider mentions that all strong passes or fortresses were not attacked. Mirza Haider further mentions that Shigar (which he refers to as the capital of Baltistan) was conquered in the first attack by Said Khan. However, the name of the ruling raja of Shigar

is not mentioned. Local tradition has it that Abdullah Khan was the raja.

It is said that Sher Shah's reign passed without strife or warfare and his son Ali Khan became the raja after him.

CHAPTER TWO: THE MAQPON DYNASTY OF SKARDU AT ITS ZENITH

ALI KHAN (1540-1565)

The zenith of the Skardu dynasty was reached during the reign of Ali Khan and his grandsons Shah Murad, Sher Shah and Ali Shah. A quarrel amongst the princesses (rani) of Dras broke out in Ali Khan's time, with the unrest spreading to the Shigar-Shinghu area because of inroads from Astor. There were two branches of the Kina-pa people, one settled in Gol and the other in Shigar-Shinghu. Using the Kina-pa of Gol to disseminate propaganda in his favour in Dras and Shigar-Shinghu, Ali Khan succeeded in winning the people of these areas over. Through the Kin-pa, he also had the independent Barq-pa people of these areas send him an appeal:

> "The people of Astor and Chilas raid us and carry off our cattle, women and men, holding them captives and enslaving them. We have no means of defending ourselves and ask Ali Khan to save us."

Ali Khan complied and constructed fortified posts on the routes to Astor, though only after he had annexed Shigar- Shinghu to his territory. Sentry posts were built at Krabosh and Gultari in Shigar and Shinghu respectively. Ali Khan's soldiers kept a vigilant watch from spring until the time when the routes to Astor became impassable. He constructed a permanent post at Goshan in Dras, stationed an army there and appointed a Kharpon (Governor) to rule over the entire region. Shigar-Shinghu and Dras were integrated solidly into the kingdom of Skardu.

The Kina-pa family of Gol were given the responsibility of defending the borders and since they had efficiently dispatched the diplomatic tasks given to them, they were given the titles and perogatives of a wazir.

GHAZI MIR (1565-1595)

Ali Khan's short life stopped his attempts at expansion. He was succeeded by his son Ghazi Mir, who continued the work of his father. Rondu was still under the Lon-che family, whose ruler had died issueless, upon which, Ghazi Mir seized Rondu. The Lon-che capital was at Stak and it continued under the new rule of Skardu as an important strategic centre because it was the last settlement near Gilgit.

After securing the Lower Indus at Rondu, Ghazi Mir turned his attention to Parkuta and Kartakhshah. These lands were at that time a part of the Ladakh dynasty and the Kharpon (Governor) of Ladakh had his seat in Kartakhshah. Ghazi Mir placed his son and heir Ali Sher Khan at the head of a military campaign to be waged against these areas by the brave people of Baltistan (Ali Sher Khan was later famous under the title "Anchan", meaning "The Great" and his conquests were a source of great pride for Skardu). Ali Sher Khan was sent as the commander-in-chief of the invading army to Parkuta. The campaign was so swift that the Ladakhis had no time to send reinforcements. The armies of Parkuta and Kartakhshah used all their strength in defence, but were vanquished. The author has seen the trenches and fortifications of the Ladakhis on the plain of Dobgar near Sirlang. Ali Sher Khan's successful attack came from the hills overlooking the trenches, forcing the defenders to flee.

After conquering Parkuta, Ali Sher Khan directly attacked Kartakhshah. This had to be done through the district of Pari across the Indus and then along the right bank on the way to Kartakhshah. In the district of Ghandos, this route passes through a very stony and almost impossible terrain bordered by high cliffs (I have seen the battlements and other defences there). The Ladakhi army made a second stand here but were routed and Kartakhshah was annexed to Skardu. Pursuing the retreating armies to Notak, Ali Sher Khan discovered internal strife in Chugtan. Using this as a pretext, he attacked Sut and conquered Choseranag and Adam from Mirza Sultan, giving them to the heirs of Chagtan and Pasham. In return for these services, he annexed Bodhkharbo and appointed his own governor there. He finally headed back for Skardu after pillaging a few

villages in Ladakh. On his way back through Kartakhshah, he appointed Haider, the heir of the former ruling family (Barqpa-singe-pa) of that place as his governor and went to Parkuta, where he made similar arrangements: he appointed notable people there to collect taxes for Skardu. His return to Skardu was celebrated joyously.

JAMIANG NAMGYAL'S ATTACK ON SUT, HIS OCCUPATION OF BODHKHARBO, ETC.:

Ali Sher Khan's attack was avenged a few years later by Jamiang Namgyal Gyalpo, who attacked Sut from Ladakh, crossing over Fatu-la. He took Bodhkharbo, putting the governor and garrison there to death; he then seized the territories of Malba and Phokar, putting their rajas to death and prepared to attack Mirza Sultan, the raja of Sut.

ALI SHER KHAN'S ATTACK ON LADAKH

At the same time, Ali Sher Khan formed a confederation with the Rajas of Shigar and Saling Khar and planned an attack on Ladakh. On hearing of the destruction and occupation of Bodhkharbo from the people who had retreaed from there, he attacked Ladakh with all the force of the confederation. The Ladakhis gave hard battle although their Gyalpo was not present, but were finally defeated and Ali Sher Khan victoriously entered the capital of Ladakh. Jamiang Namgial hurried back from Sut to fight the invading army, but was taken prisoner by Ali Sher Khan.

Ali Sher Khan pillaged the capital and other areas of Ladakh. The people of Ladakh approached him for a compromise: since he did not intend to annex Ladakh, would he consider an agreement? He accepted and the new boundary between Ladakh and Skardu was agreed upon as being at Gho-tha-mat-cho (at the Gargara Stream), integrating the Ganokh district and the Gargara stream into Skardu; Jamiang Namgyal gave his daughter Mindoq-Gyalmo in marriage to Ali Sher Khan, who returned to Skardu with his new bride and father-in-law

after setting up a temporary government in Ladakh.

PAYMENT OF ANNUAL TRIBUTE FROM LADAKH BECAUSE OF BODHKHARBO

Ali Sher Khan did not bother to take Bodhkharbo back from Ladakh and instead imposed an annual tribute, or lopchak. The Lama of the Gonpa Lama Yord was appointed to collect the tribute and present himself at the court in Skardu. Although no detailed inventory exists, the tribute finds mention in the Gonpa's history, where Lama Gonpo (the loban of the Gonpa) relates that the lopchak was collected until the Dogra conquest and ceased thereafter.

On Ali Sher Khan's victorious return to Skardu, Yabgo Sher Ghazi Khan offered his daughter in marriage to Jamian Namgyal, imposing the condition that the children born from this wedlock would be the heirs to the kingdom. Jamian Namgyal agreed and married the daughter Argyal Begum, after which he was given his kingdom back. Argyal Begum had a son Sange Namgial, who is described in the history of Ladakh.

MARRIAGE OF ALI RAI'S DAUGHTER WITH PRINCE SALIM

When the Moghul Emperor Akbar conquered and annexed Kashmir in 1589 AD, contacts developed between Baltistan and the Moghuls. The Moghul historian Zakaullah relates that the ruler of "Little Tibet" was Ali Rai at the time of Akbar's pleasure trip to Kashmir in 1000 AH (1629 AD). He probably meant Ali Sher Khan, as "Rai" was commonly used for "Raja". Although Ghazi Mir was the real ruler of Baltistan, the fame of his son and heir had obviously spread enough to confuse the historian. The historical incident is related as follows:

> "Ali Rai requested that his daughter be given in marriage to Prince Salim. Emperor Akbar agreed and the marriage took place. In this manner, Ali Rai made contact with the Moghul Empire."

It is possible that the incident related by Zakaullah was intiated by Ghazi Mir and the girl mentioned was in reality the sister of Ali Sher Khan and not his daughter.

A MILITARY MISSION FROM THE COURT OF DELHI

Zakaullah in his book "Tarikh-i-Hindustan" describes Ali Sher Khan´s attack on Ladakh:

> "During his third visit to Kashmir in 1005 AH, the Emperor Akbar decided that the people of Baltistan be given advice and sent for this purpose Umid Ali Holak, Talib Isfahani and Mohammad Quli Kashmiri to Little Tibet´s marzban (ruler) Ali Rai, while Ayub Beg and others were sent to Big Tibet´s (Ladakh) ruler. Ladakh´s military commander and wazir Raju Rai rebelled against the ruler, who immediately confiscated his holdings. Raju Rai sought the help of Baltistan´s ruler Ali Rai, who with his help conquered the fort of Ladakh, gaining much booty. Upon hearing the sound of the Emperor´s army, he appointed someone from the former ruler´s family over Ladakh and returned to Skardu."

The rest of the story is described in the history of Ladakh.

The military successes created a joy of warfare in the hearts of Ali Sher Khan and his soldiers, who now believed that a life of peace was impossible. It is recorded that Ali Sher Khan even dared to make inroads into Kashmir. During my time in Baltistan, I found no mention of this, but the historian Zakaullah writes:

> "Ali Rai´s victory in Ladakh emboldened him to launch an attack on Kashmir in 1012 AH. The Emperor ordered the Governor of Lahore, Qalach Khan to move with a contingent of soldiers to the aid of Shaista Mohammad Quli, governor of Kashmir. Qalach Khan sent under the command of his son Saifullah Khan three thousand cavalry and five hundred mail-clad infantry, but Ali Rai fled without a fight, the imperial

army pursuing him as far as it was possible to take the horses."

ALI SHER KHAN'S ATTACK ON DARDISTAN

Continued raids on Rondu, Shigar-Shinghu and Dras by the people of Gilgit, Chilas and Astor so incensed Ali Sher Khan that he decided to bring them to their knees. After crushing Astor, Chilas and Gilgit he penetrated Chitral. The ruler of Chitral at that time is not known. As a mark of his victory, he took a millstone from a water-mill and imbedded it in the trunk of a chinar tree in Baroshal, where it is still said to be in the tree. (Tr. note: several legends and folksongs concerning this feat are still alive in the Shina-speaking areas of Northern Pakistan).

Ali Sher Khan constructed a polo ground (ashgharan) at the confluence of the Bagrot and Gilgit Rivers. It still exists and is known as the "ashgharan of the Maqpon". Some ruins can also be seen there and it is possible that some picket or house was built by him. Whatever the case, this place was used by Ali Sher Khan as a principal base of operations.

ANNEXATION OF HARAMOSH WITH SKARDU

Despite the losses sustained by Ali Sher Khan in his three-year campaign, he did not annex any conquered territory, except for the Haramosh valley, which was severed from Gilgit and integrated with Rondu, to which it was adjacent.

SETTLEMENT OF PRISONERS IN BALTISTAN

Ali Sher Khan brought a number of prisoners

with him on his return and settled them in four areas:

1. Satpar and Tandal in Skardu
2. Kanaksho in Parkuta
3. Thangchan in Tolti
4. Angot, Gudakhas, Torghond, Harghosal, Memos and Karkat in Kartakhshah.

During this time, he also constructed several forts in the bordering territories of Kartakhshah, for which reason this region came to be known as "Kharmang", or "Land of many forts."

THE CONSTRUCTION OF MINDOQKHAR AND THE CANAL BY THE GYALMO

In Ali Sher Khan's absence, his queen (gyalmo) did not like staying with the people of Skardu in Kharpoche and therefore caused a separate palace to be constructed outside the fort. This she called "Mindoq-khar", after her own name. Near the palace, she planted a garden, which became famous as the "Halo-Bagh". As both the palace and the garden were at a higher level than Skardu, she had a canal built from the Sat stream. This canal can still be seen over a ridge near the Sika-Maidan Bazar and is witness to the great deal of effort its construction must have taken. While Ali Khan praised her efforts on his return from Gilgit, he objected to the location of the palace, which he thought interfered with the security and defensibility of the fort. The palace is no longer there, but I was shown the site where it once stood.

ALI SHER KHAN ASCENDS THE THRONE

On his return to Skardu, Ali Sher Khan ascended the throne approximately in 1015 AH (or 1595-1633 AD) and undertook no further campaign. Instead, he spent the rest of his rule in using the captives from his campaigns to develop new settlements and colonies.

Damming the Satpara Stream:

While preoccupied with development, he noticed that the water from the Satpara Stream was not sufficient for Skardu and dammed the stream where it flowed through a narrow gorge, so that water could accumulate when it was not needed in winter and be gradually released when required. This dam was made of large stones and hard lime mortar and had three opening for drawing water. A magnificent feat of engineering, this dam stands to this day as a tribute to the effort and industry of this great ruler. Unfortunately, it has fallen in disrepair and may be completely destroyed with the passage of time. The local farmers occasionally mend it, but lack the resources to undertake any major repairs.

Ali Sher Khan was doubtlessly the greates ruler of Skardu in terms of his conquests and his development of his land and the Skardu princely family can be justifiably proud of him. The title of "The Great"(anchan) is surely an appropriate one.

ABDAL KHAN (1633-1635)

Ali Sher Khan had three sons, Adam Khan, Abdal Khan and Ahmad Khan. During his lifetime, he had entrusted the lands of Parkuta and Kartakhshah to Abdal Khan. The eldest son Adam was the heir apparent,w hile the youngest, Ahmad Khan, lived in Rondu. On the death of the father, a struggle for succession occurred between the two elder brothers. Abdal being stronger succeeded in seizing the throne at Skardu, while Adam Khan fled to Kashmir and onwards to Delhi.

Abdal Khan's attack on Shigar, Hasan Khan's flight to Delhi

During this time, Mohammad Khan (more commonly known by the name Mama Khan) was the ruler of Shigar and had twelve sons. On his death, Abdal Khan attacked Shigar and took all twelve sons captive and had them sent to twelve different districts to have them killed. Eleven were murdered according to his instructions, but the twelfth and heir apparent (Hasan Khan) escaped to Kashmir with the help

of some people from Skardu. From Kashmir, he went to Delhi to meet Adam Khan and a strong friendship developed between them as a result of their common enmity with Abdal Khan. Adam Khan helped Hasan develop contacts with the Imperial Court, but no help was forthcoming. Finally, Hasan got an opportunity to accompany the Emperor on a tiger hunt. Hasan allegedly exhibited great bravery when a wounded tiger attacked the Emperor by coming between the tiger and the Emperor and killing the tiger with a sword. For his bravery and loyalty, the Emperor rewarded him with a shahi farman (Imperial Order) to the governor of Kashmir: under this farman, Hasan Khan was to be reinstated on his ancestral throne with the help of military aid from Kashmir.

Hasan Khan's reinstatement in Shigar

Abdal Khan thought it cowardly and unnmanly to give up fertile Shigar without a struggle. Accordingly, he took on the invading Imperial Army and was taken captive in battle. Skardu's control was taken away from him and he spent his last days as a prisoner in Shigar, where his grave can still be seen. This incident is described by the historian Zakaullah thus:

> "The Great Emperor Jehangir decided to invade Tibet and gave a command to this effect to Hashim Khan, son of Qasim Khan, Governor of Kashmir. The latter gathered the forces of local landowners, much infantry and cavalry and entered the land with great difficulty. Apart from massive killing, they could not accomplish much and returned."
>
> "In the beginning of 1046 AH (1634 AD), the Emperor Shah Jehan ordered Zafar Khan, Governor of Kashmir to invade Western Tibet with his army. Zafar Khan took eight thousand infantry and cavalry and took the route through Kartse. He reached Little Tibet after one month, crossed the Nelab River and circled the area near the residence of the ruler (marzban) of Tibet."
>
> "Ali Rai, the father of the ruler Abdal had constructed two forts at a very great height, the higher of which was called Kharpoche and the other Khachna. Both forts could be entered only by a narrow and winding path.

Abdal had taken shelter in Kharpoche, leaving the other fort to his wazir Mohammad Murad. He had sent his family to the safety of Shigar, which was on a mountain beyond the river. After a careful reconnaissance of the two forts, Zafar Khan surmised that neither siege nor direct attack would be successful. Instead, he decided on a two-fold plan: he would try to sow discontent among the populace, while a part of his army would attack the Shigar fort across the river. It may here be pointed out that the longest time an army could stay there was two months, as a longer stay meant that all exits from Baltistan would be blocked by snow. Mindful of this, Zafar Khan sent Mir Fakhruddin annd Farhad Beg Baluch with four thousand cavalry and infantry to the Shigar fort and busied himself with the harassment of Abdal Khan. Sealing all exits to the fort, Zafar Khan used a member of the local court and a Kashmiri landowner familiar with the people to win their alleigance.

"Mir Fakhruddin arranged for some boats at the river and sent two thousand men at midnight to clear the defences of the enemy, which were on a high cliff overlooking the main route to the fort. The Imperial Army routed the defenders, crossed the river and reached the foot of the fort. As they were preparing the attack, they were raided by Abdal's fifteen-year old son, who thought the invaders to be small in numbers. Farhad Beg stopped his advance near Kamarkoh and was wounded in the violent battle that ensued. A few of Zafar Khan's servants were also killed, but the raiders were outmatched and had to flee to the fort. The sight of the mighty Moghul Army struck terror in his heart and he fled from the fort with some valuables, leaving his family behind. On the 29th of Rabiul Awwal, Mir Fakharuddin entered the Shigar fort and was unable to prevent his army from looting and killing. He captured Abdal Khan's family, gave chase to his son, but the pursuers were unable to catch him, bringing back some gold and silver he had dropped in his flight."

"Zafar Khan was delighted at the success in Shigar and decided to take Kharpoche and Khachna. He succeeded in using the local people to create so much intrigue that the garrison commander of Khachna surrendered without a struggle, though well-stocked with food and provisions. The loss of the fort, the capture of his family and the dissatisfaction of his men disheartened Abdal Khan, who came out of Kharpoche talk to Zafar Khan. One day later, Zafar Khan and Abdal Khan entered Kharpoche and had the khutba (sermon) read in the name of the Emperor, after which Zafar Khan rejoined his troops."

"The Emperor was informed and Mir Fakharuddin left Skardu with 200,000 Rupees and the families of Habib Chak and Ahmad Chak. These two brothers had sown strife and discontent against the Empire to slow the advance of the Imperial Army and they had fled to Tibet from Kashmir."

"Zafar Khan was apprehensive of the coming winter, which would block his return and also worried about the intriguers Abdal Khan had sent to Kashmir to sow discontent. He therefore left Skardu to Mohammad Murad (one of the ministers of Abdal Khan) and withdrew with his soldiers without even assessing the location and quantity of Abdal Khan's wealth. The withdrawal prompted the Emperor to send a farman to Zafar Khan:

"If the country has been invaded, the forts conquered and the ruler humbled, there is no need for such a hasty withdrawal. It causes the vanquished to lose faith in the strength of the Empire and your course of action has displeased the Emperor greatly." "

There are two common routes to Tibet, one through Kartse and the other through Lar. Both were used by Zafar Khan in his invasion. The route through Kartse is four times longer than the other one and has narrow paths

permitting riders to pass only single file, but has the advantage of being warmer and less snow-bound. This makes it faster than the shorter Lar route, which has constant snow and ice at places and makes travel difficult. The initial part of this rout is easy, but the most difficult part lies thirty kos from Kashmir and can be compared to the Pir Panjal range. Both routes have no provision for supplies on the way. Zafar Khan and his army took only enough supplies to last them till their withdrawal into Kashmir.

Little Tibet has an area of 21 pargana and 37 qillah. The uneven terrain provides a very small area for agriculture. The main crops are wheat and rice (Author's note: Rice may possibly have been grown there at that time, but this is not the case now). The total annual revenue of the land cannot be more than 100,000 Rupees.

A stream in the land yields 2,000 tola of alluvial gold annually, but the poor quality of the metal makes it sell only for 7 rupees a tola. The fruits of the area are apricots, plums, sweet melons and sweet delicious grapes. The apples here are red both from the inside and outside. All fruits (mulberry and plum, apricot and apple, melon and grape) ripen in the same season.

ADAM KHAN, RAJA OF SKARDU (1635-1660)
(Mirza Khan 1651 and Murad Khan 1660 as viceroys)

During Adam Khan's time, there was much external and internal strife, but no sequential history is available. The Shigar-Namah has given a poetic and non-sequential account, which will be summarized later. A synopsis follows: After the arrest of Abdal Khan, the throne was temporarily handed over to Murad Khan by the Imperial Army and passed on to Adam Khan. Adam Khan did not come to rule personally, but installed Mirza Khan of Kartakhshah on the throne of Skardu as his viceroy. This Mirza Khan did for a decade, then seized power for himself.

MURAD KHAN, RAJA OF SKARDU (1660-1680)

Murad Khan reached Delhi after being defeated by Imam Quli Khan of Shigar. Adam Khan made Murad his son-in-law and acknowledged him as his heir. After loosening Mirza Khan's hold on the throne of Skardu, he installed Murad Khan on the throne. Murad Khan ruled in Adam Khan's name and later became the raja under the name of Shah Murad.

The exploits of Imam Quli Khan, Raja of Shigar, Shah Murad, Sher Shah, Ali Shah, other rajas of Skardu, Rahim Khan, Hatim Khan, Babar & Yaqub, etc., are all narrated in the Shigar-Namah, which was probably compiled in the time of Imam Quli Khan. The manuscript in my possession was written in 1166 AH and contains all the facts written in a lyrical manner. I have painstakingly sorted the facts and attempted to create a perspective. It is tragic that the first few pages of the manuscript are missing, rendering unknown the name of the author and the date of writing. Some missing pages in the middle also break the continuity.

When Murad Khan received the kingdom of Skardu through the offices of Zafar Khan, he did not limit himself to the area and immediately launched an attack on Shigar. Imam Quli Khan was the Raja of Shigar at that time. What follows is the narration of this incident in the Shigar-Namah.

MURAD KHAN ATTACKS SHIGAR, IS DEFEATED AND FLEES TO RONDU

"As morning dawned, Shah Murad mustered his ministers, courtiers and soldiers, crossed the Indus and moved his forces towards Shigar. Hardly had he entered when spies told him that Imam Quli Khan was coming with the speed of the wind to confront him and had the most famous fighters of Shigar with him, all of them hungry for Murad Khan's blood. The spies told Murad Khan that if he wanted to live, he should make peace with Imam Quli Khan, as escape was impossible. This news caused consterntion in Shah Murad's army, leading to desertions, which emboldened the Shigar forces and they determined to capture Shah Murad. Imam Quli stopped them and said that his father-in-law Shah Murad deserved the same respect as his own father and should not be dishonoured; he should merely be told to leave Shigar for the wilderness of Rondu, even though the latter land was under the sovereignty of Shigar. "I forgive him in God's name!" Imam Quli Khan proclaimed, "but if he wants to fight, let him meet me on the battlefield."

Shah Murad fled on receiving this message, but not before looting the property of Hasan Khan's late paternal grandfather, which property included horses, swords, gold, silver, bridles and other valuables. He finally arrived laded with booty in Rondu, a sad and lonely man.

Imam Quli Khan was told of this looting and asked by his commanders whether they should pursue the fugitive. Showing restraint and generosity, Imam Quli Khan said, "The world is impermanent, but love of the world makes men ignorant of the love of Allah. I have given Shah Murad nothing but kindness and mercy, but he has repaid me with deceit. Leave him as he is and have nothing to do with him."

RONDU IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY HIJRA (17TH CENTURY AD)

Shah Murad began to live in Rondu. The conditions there are described in the Shigar-Namah:

"Shah Murad was forced to live with devils instead of men. Rondu is as narrow as a grave, no flat surface even the size of a shield existing and no contentment

to be had from taking a walk on even ground. The people of Rondu are witless and manners and politeness have not yet found their way into this land. The people look like humans, but have all the qualities of the devil. They have so much hair on their bodies that they look like bears. Morals, ethics and intention have no meaning for them. They are slaves to their baser instincts: they fill their bellies like cattle and dream like rabbits. Using the wealth he had brought with him to build a standing for himself there, Murad Khan stayed in Rondu for two years and continued taking wealth from the people and storing it. He then set out for the court at Delhi with the intention of claiming the throne of Tibet for himself. He left his brother Ali Shah in Rondu, appointed Sher Shah as his viceroy and took leave from Imam Quli Khan and Shah Sultan among others. He presented himself at the Imperial Court, arousing the Emperor´s compassion. After consulting his minister Sa´adullah Khan, the Emperor commanded that Nakatkhuda (the daughter of Adam Khan present at that time in Delhi) be wedded to Murad Khan, uniting the families and dissolving old hostilities. The marriage took place as ordered and the couple began a life of mutual love and tolerance. The kingdom of Skardu was handed over to Adam Khan, who appointed Mirza Khan of Kartakhshah as his viceroy in Skardu.

MIRZA KHAN S REBELLION AND MURAD KHAN´S RULE

For ten years, Mirza Khan ruled as Adam Khan´s viceroy with peace and success. However, he quarreled with Adam Khan´s minister and killed him in an ensuing dispute. He then rebelled against Adam Khan and unilaterally declared his independence. He closed all routes to Kashmir and repulsed Zafar Khan when the latter arrived on the scene. On learning of this, Adam Khan called Murad Khan and said, "My son! My youth has passed and old age begins to weaken me and no flower like you has bloomed in my garden. Now you are my only son. Serve me as long as I am alive and I will make you my heir. I give you my country and my only wish is that you do not do other than I command during my lifetime."

ADAM KHAN´S SKARDU CAMPAIGN AND ATTACK ON KHARPOCHE FORT

On orders from the Emperor of Hindustan, Adam Khan with his son-in-law Murad Khan set out from Kashmir to oust Mirza Khan. Imam Quli Khan of Shigar was also Adam Khan´s son-in-law and both regarded each other as father and son. Before reaching Skardu, Adam Khan sent this letter to Imam Quli Khan:

"I have come with the Imperial Army to punish Mirza Khan as this ungrateful wretch has disobeyed my commands and killed my well-wishers. I wish to destroy this disobedient fool as long as I have life in my body, but if he repents his misdeeds and asks for forgiveness, giving in writing that he is a serf, I am prepared to forgive his great sin and let him continue as before. However, if he continues to be disobedient, I shall persecute him ruthlessly. You are the light of my eyes and I expect you now to come to my aid with your army. Together we can remove this wretch from the throne of Skardu and in his stead place Murad Khan, who will rule the land from Kartakhshah to Rondu. I have made Murad Khan my son and heir. May he remain your friend and helper both in good times and in bad."

Imam Quli Khan sent this reply:

"You are for me the Holy Ka´aba and Jerusalem. Obedience to you is one of my primary duties. A persistently disobedient enemy merely invites his own destruction. How can a fox escape the claws of a lion? Mirza Khan gains no advantage by doing this and I have told him time and again not to risk his life in this manner. I have told him that even if he gathers sufficient strength, he would find it difficult to overcome a lion like Adam Khan. Unfortunately, my advice has had no effect on him and he has not tried to mend his evil ways. He is overweening and hospitality is unknown to him. Show him no mercy or consideration. The country I rule is through your favour and it is my duty to drive out your enemies. Come without reservation and you will see us ready for your help."

Together with this letter, Imam Quli Khan wrote a separate letter to Mirza Khan:

"Unfortunately, you have not recognized the worth of your master and are the cause of your own destruction. You did not heed any advice from me, but now you can understand that what I told you was for your own good. As part of my duty to serve you, I tell you this:

Adam Khan and Murad Khan took the story of their maltreatment at your hands to the Emperor of Delhi, who has sent them at the head of an Imperial Army to kill you. It is not wise to expect any sort of mercy from them. Do not continue to waste time in play and enjoyment, but soberly consider the situation at hand. I can help you escape from torture and sorrow. You will definitely suffer at their hands and not one of your supporters will be left alive. If you value your life, hand over your fort to me and escape from Skardu. I have done my duty as a friend, but it is up to you to decide whether what I tell you is good or bad."

When Mirza Khan read this clear letter, all ignorance was lifted from his mind and he became fearful. After showering profuse gratitude on Imam Quli Khan, he sent this message:

"I was unaware that so much hardship would befall me. Forgive my mistakes and save me from destruction; I have been a friend to you in the past, so do not hand me over to the enemy, who takes out the bones of men and stuffs their bodies with straw. I have many enemies here. Favour me by coming to Skardu, where I will hand the fort and country over to you to do with as you wish."

The following day, a very worried messenger came to Mirza Khan and told him that Adam Khan was approaching with his army. In great fear of his own life, Mirza Khan sent an urgent message to Imam Quli Khan:

"Adam Khan has reached Skardu and my hands and feet are cold with fear. Help me or I am lost. I show no pride towards you and hereby give up all claim to the land."

Upon receiving this message, Imam Quli Khan set out with his army for Skardu immediately. Mirza Khan breathed a sigh of relief when Imam Quli Khan crossed the Indus and sent him this message:

"Have no fear, for I have sent some of my men to you to guard the fort and to quell any rioting or dissension. I have reached Skardu and I shall save you from your enemies.

The fort of Kharpoche was thus captured without a fight and Imam Quli Khan moved towards the forces of Adam Khan after occupying the fort. On hearing of this, Adam Khan sent his horse with a golden bridle for Imam Quli to ride on and soon saw Imam Quli riding like a lion at the head of a great army. Behind Imam Quli rode Hatim Khan, also like a

lion and behind Hatim were the great warriors of Shigar with countless other soldiers. Adam Khan met Imam Quli Khan, his heart bursting with happiness and both dismounted and embraced. A feast was then prepared.

On the following day, Adam Khan called Imam Quli Khan to him and said, "My heart is restless and I will divulge to you a secret to lighten my heart and to seek your advice, as I have no well-wisher other than you. Your brother-in-law (wife's sister's husband) Murad Khan supports me merely out of convenience, but he has no love for me and his heart is against me. If I do not get the fort for myself, I am finished. He has already made allegations against me in front of the Emperor Shah Jahan and has made every effort to oppose me, but the mercy of God and blessings of religious elders gave me victory, rendering him helpless and my slave. If I do not succeed, your brother-in-law will bite me like a snake and strife will break out again, leaving only sorrow and desolation. You can solve this problem."

The lion of a man gave this answer:

"Remove all apprehension from your heart. I will arrange everything to ensure that your name will be above all the others again. However, I have a small request to make to you: please let Mirza Khan go where he wishes and hide himself like a fox in some small cave, where he can live the rest of his life in peace. Whenever I came to meet you, I had to pass through his territory and he always treated me with great respect. It would shame me if he was maltreated on my account. If you agree, then let the fort be handed over to my brother-in-law and command him to become my friend and helper for all time. He should convince me by swearing this with his hand on the holy book."

Adam Khan replied, "Your scheme pleases me. Go and call your brother-in-law, so that I can hand over the fort to him on your intercession and tell him to make peace with you. I will let Mirza Khan go on your request, otherwise he would not have gone unpunished."

Murad Khan appeared and Adam Khan said to him, "O light of my eyes, Imam Quli Khan is like a son to me. I have handed the fort over to you on his recommendation. Be loyal to him under all circumstances and put your hand on the Quran to swear this. You shall incur my anger if you ever disobey him." To this, Murad Khan replied: "There is no need for you to say this, for Imam Quli Khan is the light of my eyes. My nearness to you has given me a certain nearness to

him (Tr. note: this is a reference to the fact that the daughters of Adam Khan were married to the two men). Only a witless person would destroy his own eyes with his hands." Adam Khan retorted:"There is no reliance on mere talk. Take the Quran in your hand and swear it." Murad Khan then took the Holy Book and swore and oath that the Word of God would strike him dead if he was disloyal to Imam Quli Khan. On the completion of the oath, Imam Quli Khan went over to Mirza Khan and said to him, "I have saved you from the claws of the tiger. Come down from the mountain and I will send you to Shigar, where I shall always treat you with great honour." Mirza Khan accepted, came down from Kharpoche, gathered his wealth and stayed awhile in Shigar. He then sought and received sanctuary in Khapulu from the ruler of that area.

The handing over of Kharpoche to Murad Khan as the viceroy of Adam Khan:

On the next day, Imam Quli Khan sent Adam Khan this message:

"Please enter the fort of Kharpoche, which has been cleared of your enemies, who have left the country." Adam Khan replied, "Even the great Rustam could not have accomplished what you have. However, the Emperor has sent Alim Beg and Mohammad Shafi with me as his representatives and it would thus be more expedient to hand the fort over to them." Imam Quli immediately understood and handed over the fort to Alim Beg and Mohammad Shafi, who handed it to Adam Khan, who endowed it to Murad Khan, saying, "My son, do not go beyond my command. I am making you the viceroy. Cause no pain to my friends and cut no trees from my garden. Do not think of yourself as long as I am alive. Everything belongs to me. You can become the ruler of the country only when my eyes close in death."

After this, they all went to the fort where Adam Khan sat on the throne and granted a place for Imam Quli Khan in Kharpoche. After some days of celebration, Adam Khan said to Ali Beg, "By the grace of the Emperor, my desires have been fulfilled and there is no point in staying on in this country." Alim Beg answered, "No doubt it is time to take the army back." Thus Adam Khan left Skardu, went to Kashmir and thence to the Emperor, who was greatly pleased and presented the ruler of Shigar with an order of merit. Adam Khan then went to Kashmir and spent the rest of his life peacefully."

(Here the narrative from the Shigar-Namah ends)

ADAM KHAN'S CAMPAIGN ACCORDING TO THE TARIKH-I-HINDUSTAN

Zakaullah describes the incident in his Tarikh-i-Hindustan as having occurred during the fifth Emperor's reign (i.e., 1061 AH or 1651 AD):

"On the twelfth of Rajab, Adam Khan was sent with Ghulam Nabi, his nephew Mohammad Murad, Alim Beg, Naeem Beg and a group of landowners from Kashmir to attack Mirza Khan of Tibet who had rebelled. He was ordered to take the fort of the land and return it to the servants of the Empire. On the 27th of Sh'aban, Adam Khan of Tibet submitted the report that the arrival of the Imperial Army had led to the flight of Mirza Khan and the fort came under the control of Imperial Officers. The Emperor gave control of Skardu to Adam Khan and his brothers. The revenue from this land was 800,000 dam.

(The Shigar-Namah continues from here)

"Adam Khan had returned to Kashmir, the Imperial Army had left Skardu and Murad Khan took over the administration, but his respect for Adam Khan was so great that he did not even move his tongue without Adam Khan's permission. All commands from Adam Khan were carried out by him without delay.

Mirza Khan had returned to his land of Kartakhshah at that time and began to rule there, hatching intrigues against Murad Khan together with the latter's enemies. When Murad Khan came to know of this, he tackled the problem in the following manner:

Murad Khan disliked the ruler of Kartakhshah as he had suffered at his hands and thus wrote this letter to Adam Khan: "The Mirza of Kartakhshah has joined our enemies. With your permission, I shall make preparations to destroy him." Adam Khan's heart was saddened on reading this and he replied, "I made Imam Quli Khan your helper. His decision should be your course of action. He should never be given cause for complaint, for he is your friend and helper at all times." Ashamed of his unilateral decision, Murad Khan showed Adam Khan's letter to Imam Quli Khan and begged the latter's forgiveness. He asked him to come to Tanmusah, where they could discuss the matter verbally.

Unhappy at receiving this message, Imam Quli Khan called his courtiers and ministers together and said, "Murad Khan wants our help for a campaign against Kartakhshah as he has suffered in that land. Please consider this problem carefully and tell me the consequences it can have for the country. They unanimously answered: "We are aware of your brother-in-law's actions and believe that any involvement with Murad Khan will bring suffering and destruction to our land. One had best have nothing to do with him. The enemy should never be underestimated. We are still unhappy with you for placing him on the throne of Skardu against our advice." The ruler replied, "If we return good for evil, the world will praise us. Furthermore, I took pity on him once and it is not right for me to turn away now. Let us prepare for an attack on Kartakhshah. I will go to Tanmusah now to consult with Murad Khan."

The rajas of Shigar and Skardu met. After an exchange of gifts, Murad Khan said with great humility, "May I always make the path you tread on soft and green. Please think of coming to my aid, for I have no friend or helper other than you in the whole of Tibet. If you help me, we can scatter the enemy in a few days." Imam Quli replied, "Have no fear. As long as I have life in my body, I shall remain your friend and ally." It was thus decided that the armies of Skardu and Shigar would attack Kartakhshah.

The land of Kartakhshah is as narrow as the bridge of sirat (Tr. note: in Islamic belief, a narrow bridge thinner than the edge of a sword will have to be crossed on the day of judgement) and there is no joy in this land. The inhabitants are so tight-fisted and short-sighted that they will not even offer a piece of bread to a mendicant. Nothing can be seen except barren cliffs with settlements in small mountain pockets. The settlement of Kharmang lies between two mountains constantly having a flood of water flowing betwen them.

Murad Khan's attack on Kartakhshah:

Entering Kartakhshah, the warriors of Skardu and Shigar reached Parkuta (Tr. note: now known as Mehdiabad). Mirza's son Ali Khan confronted the invading army at the Parkuta fort, but warrior's force and wisdom conquered him. The fort was taken, Ali Khan was captured and

the army moved on to Tolti, where they took the fort. They finally camped near Kharmang, where Mirza Khan himself was in the fort. Built on high cliffs, this fort is inaccessible and appears to be touching the sky. Mirza was like an angel in this lofty abode. The brave youths of Tibet tried for two days and nights to take the fort, but the sheer cliff gave no purchase even for a fingernail. Seeing this, Murad Khan gathered his army and advised them that force would have no effect on the fort, which could be taken by other means. He advised them to be patient.

The army commanders were sent in all directions to collect food and provisions and the army showed all its force in pillaging the entire area. A huge pile of these provisions was placed in full view of the besieged fort and the army laid siege for four months. Finally Mirza Khan sent a message saying that he would leave if he would be allowed to go where he wished to. The besieging rajas agreed to this, whereupon Mirza Khan emerged from the fort bearing presents and met Imam Quli and Murad Khan, who came out of their tents to meet him. Humbly, Mirza Khan said, "Forgive my sins and I shall be eternally in your favour." The rajas of Skardu and Shigar replied, "Go without fear in the direction you think your path is free." Mirza Khan was delighted to hear this and left with his friends and relatives for Ladakh, while the two rajas of Skardu and Shigar raised the flag of victory.

GIFTING OF KARTAKHSHAH TO SHER KHAN

Imam Quli Khan advised Murad Khan: "You cannot rule over such a large area of land. Give the entire area of Kartakhshah to your brother Sher Khan." Murad agreed to this suggestion, placed Sher Khan on the throne of Kartakhshah and the invading army pulled out of Kartakhshah.

ALI KHAN'S ESCAPE TO KHAPULU

Ali Khan escaped to Khapulu, eluding his captors in the night. On hearing this, Murad Khan swore:"He will not escape my anger. I will descend on Khapulu like a scourge and destroy the enemy.

The Khapulu Campaign:

Murad Khan turned his attention to Khapulu after conquering Kartakhshah. Imam Quli Khan agreed to help him and both armies attacked Kharko, taking the fort. Moving on, they attacked and took the fort at Halde and the fort of Sarfa-khar suffered the same fate. They accumulated much booty.

Rahim Khan, Raja of Khapulu, had his capital in Thorsekhar. A letter was sent to him there: "Why have you disobeyed our commands? You are not aware of the might of our sword. The fort you hold so arrogantly can be destroyed by our armies in no time. You have seen how we conquered Kartakhshah with the force of the sword and humiliated the enemy. Such a humiliation now faces you."

Rahim Khan replied, "Why have you attacked our land? Why have you become devils instead of human beings? You know that I am no subservient to your commands and that to bow my head in homage to another is worse than death for me. Expect nothing but war from me. Come if you have strength, but remember that you will run like a fox before my sword. You will be the result of your own suffering."

The reply put Murad Khan in deep thought. He consulted his commanders and ministers who after deliberation said:"The fort of Thorsekhar is as high as the sky and can neither be destroyed nor taken by storm. The only possible solution is to besiege it and loot the area around to fort for food and supplies. The enemy will weaken when grain is short and the lion's heart will shrinks to a cat's size."

This was put into action and the siege lasted three months, during which two or three indecisive battles took place. The shortage of food prompted a worried message to Murad Khan: "Please forgive my errors. I will hand the

fort over to you on the condition that you will not punish me." Murad Khan replied, "I accept your conditions. May I not remain a Muslim if I go back on my word." Rahim Khan was delighted at this verbal message and came out of the fort to greet Murad Khan, bringing Mirza Khan with him. He fell in submission at Murad Khan's feet. Murad Khan went to the House of God and knelt in a prayer of thankfulness. He praised the army, occupied the fort and the land and finally returned victoriously to Skardu.

Murad Khan informed Adam Khan of his conquests and sent Mirza Khan to the latter with the message that the Mirza's fate would be decided by Adam Khan. Adam Khan sent the Mirza to an imperial prison in Delhi. Murad Khan's worldly desires robbed him of his faith and belief: he went back on his word and imprisoned Rahim Khan.

Murad Khan's Campaign at Kharbo

Greatly emboldened by his victories, Murad Khan looked for new opportunities of warfare. He gathered his military commanders and said, "Poreg is under our influence and its people like us, but we must wrest the area of Kharbo from the hands of the enemy." They replied: "It is no great problem for us to separate Kharbo from Ladakh, but Imam Quli Khan should be consulted, as his help is necessary." Imam Quli was accordingly approached and he sent a contingent under the command of Amir Khan. The combined armies besieged the fort at Kharbo. Reinforcements were sent from Ladakh to fight the invaders and a bloody battle ensued. Finally, the Ladakhi army broke and ran for the fort, but their path was blocked by the Skardu forces. Nine hundred Ladakhis were captured, fifty escaped and the rest were killed. Murad Khan raised the banner of victory over the fort.

The fifty Ladakhis who had escaped reached home with the news and there was much mourning. A way was sought by the people to secure the release of the captives and a plan was agreed upon: Murad Khan's sister and her two sons were captives in Ladakh and they would be exchanged for the nine hundred prisoners. Murad Khan agreed, the exchange was made and he returned to Skardu.

After the Kharbo conquest, Murad Khan gave the territories of Halde and Khapulu to his sister's sons, Babar and Yaqub, explaining to them that it was their ancient

right: Rahim Khan had taken Hasan Khan's land by force after the latter's death, sending his two sons Babar and Yaqub to Ladakh as captives of the Gyalpo (ruler) there. Murad Khan was satisfied and the sons were happy to get their rightful heritage back.

Murad Khan's Salang Khar Campaign:

Tradition has it that after giving Thorsekhar to Babar and Yaqub, Murad Khan attacked Hatim Khan. The latter knew it was useless to resist, so he called the Raja of Shigar, Imam Quli Khan as arbiter. Further invasion of Hatim Khan's territory was halted by an agreement under which Komnes was separated from Salang Khar and ceded to Kiris. "Phong Naq" is the name given to the row of stones between Kiris and Balghar, marking the border between Kiris and Salang Khar since the agreement. All other land captured by Murad Khan was returned and the boundaries have remained the same since then.

THE DEATH OF ADAM KHAN

A messenger reached from Kashmir with the news that Adam Khan had passed away and there was much sorrow. An urgent message was sent to Imam Quli Khan, who hurried to Skardu to console Murad Khan, who asked Imam Quli whether it was advisable for him to go to Hindustan immediately or not. Imam Quli Khan advised him to present himself to the Imperial Court without delay. Accordingly, Murad Khan presented himself before Shah Jahan and was treated with honour, being accorded all the titles of the late Adam Khan. He stayed a few days in Kashmir on his return and made his way back to Skardu.

Murad Khan's daughter marries the son of Habib Khan, Raja of Gilgit:

In the peaceful three years that followed, Murad Khan developed contacts with Gilgit. These contacts he cemented by giving his daughter in marriage to the son of Habib Khan, Raja of Gilgit. His wealth and status rose at

this alliance.

For two or three years, there was peace in Gilgit. Then one of Habib Khan's sons spread strife in his land. Disobeying his father, he sent a message to Shah Rais, Raja of Yasin: "I am your well-wisher. Help me by becoming the ruler of my country and I will never disobey you. My brothers are bent on killing me and my father does not care for me. He has formed an alliance with Murad Khan of Skardu and when I tried to stop this alliance, he (my father) became my enemy. My father is a simpleton who does not understand that Murad Khan will hold us captive in the end. Help me and have mercy, so I can escape from the clutches of the enemy." Shah Rais replied, "Do not lose hope and have no fear. I am willing to send an army to your aid so you can fight the enemy."

Habib Khan came to know of this and was very disturbed, writing a letter to Murad Khan: "My son has disobeyed me and has joined hands with my enemies. If you delay sending your army, I am lost. Save your garden from the coming of autumn. My eyes impatiently await your army's arrival."

Murad Khan immediately sought Imam Quli Khan's advice, telling him, "Unrest has broken out in Gilgit and the enemy threatens my son-in-law. If we do not come to his rescue, all of Gilgit will fall into the hands of the enemy." Imam Quli Khan replied, "Do not worry, for I am always at your service. Send the army under my command and I will leave immediately to stop the advance of the enemy."

Murad Khan's Gilgit Campaign and the attack on Nomal Fort:

On hearing such a reply, Murad Khan kissed Imam Quli on the forehead and gave him command of the entire army, sending his brothers along. The route to Gilgit is narrow and has nothing except rocks and stones. The people of Gilgit are not civilized, adhering neither to Islam nor to correct customs and manners. Even wayfarers are killed by them. They have killed countless Muslims. The army under Imam Quli Khan set out from Skardu to destroy these infidels.

Habib Khan's land was reached after a twenty-day march. He welcomed them with great hospitality, provided reinforcements and they moved together in the directon of

Nomal. The chief of the fort became apprehensive at seeing such a large army, but his minister, son and other friends gathered round him, saying, "Do not worry. We will fight the enemy as long as we have life in our bodies and cut their heads off like gourds." A fierce battle ensued and the battlefield was red with blood, but the enemy could not be defeated. The campaign lasted four months with much bloodletting on both sides and no victory or defeat on either side. Finally, food became short and the besieged army began to tire. Imam Quli received a message from the fort: "If you promise to forgive my error, I will present myself before you."

Imam Quli wrote to Murad Khan: "The enemy is ready to submit if they are forgiven. I am ready to do as you command." Murad Khan replied: "Our word of honour may be given to obtain his submission on the condition that he is brought before me. I will not be a Muslim if I do not give his land back to him."

Imam Quli Khan returned after giving this promise and he was met on his way back by Murad Khan with much celebration. However, Murad Khan went back on his word and imprisoned the chief. On learning of this, Imam Quli Khan wrote a letter to Murad Khan: "You have sullied your faith. Desist forthwith, or face the eternal curse of God." Murad Khan ignored the advice and Imam Quli Khan left for Shigar with a heavy heart. There was much sadness among the people.

<u>The murder of Murad Khan's son-in-law and his second Gilgit campaign:</u>

After three years of peace, a message came from Gilgit: Murad Khan's son-in-law Habib Khan had been decapitated with a sword by one Aki Khan. Chaos and unrest had followed and a worried Murad Khan sought counsel from his commanders and ministers. They courageously answered in unison: "The enemy must be crushed without delay and help must be sought from Imam Quli Khan." Pleased with this advice, Murad Khan requested Imam Quli Khan for help and received this reply: "I have sent a contingent sufficient for fighting the enemy. I have had to suffer greatly on your account in the past and would appreciate if this humble person is not made to suffer in future as a result of your doings."

The reply so disturbed Murad Khan that he could not sleep at night and his days were rendered restless. His friends said to him: "You have not kept your word. You promised before witnesses to forgive the Chief of Nomal, but you imprisoned him. This has made Imam Quli Khan unhappy." Murad Khan was ashamed on hearing this, but continued to prepare for war.

He took Amir Khan, Sher Khan and other warriors with him to the borders of Gilgit. Aki Khan entered a cave like a fox and blocked the route to Gilgit. The warriors of Tibet reached the cave, lit a fire at its mouth and sat down after blocking the exit. When the heat inside became unbearable, Aki Khan called for mercy. The fire was removed, Aki Khan was caught and brought before a pleased Murad Khan, who appointed one of his companions to rule Gilgit and went back to Skardu.

Another message came from Gilgit: Botah had started strife there, while Chalis Khan and Hartam had formed an alliance to fight Murad Khan. Murad Khan sent a message to Shigar: "Gilgit is going out of my hands. Help your brother-in-law and save me from dishonour." Imam Quli Khan replied, "I do not have the strength to attain the unattainable. Furthermore, a sister of the ruler of Kashgar is visiting my land. She and her large caravan wish to go back and the ruler of Kashgar has commanded that they be sent back. I am sending Amir Khan with my army and he will help you fight the enemy."

Murad Khan restlessly wrote back: "Please forgive any mistake I may have made. I do not need Amir Khan and it is my desire that you yourself should come. However, if you send your entire army, you can save yourself the trouble of coming." Angered at this letter, Imam Quli Khan exclaimed: "What does Murad Khan expect from me? He betrays any trust put in him and breaks all his promises. One must be careful of a person who does not fear God. I feel no nearness to him and will not mention his name in gatherings." Ashamed by this reply but persistent in his plans, Murad Khan marched towards Gilgit. Botah and Chalis Khan fled on hearing of his arrival. They stayed a few days in Azdavar, but fled in fear even from there. After clearing Gilgit of all hostile elements, Murad Khan returned to Skardu.

Murad Khan's threat to Imam Quli Khan and a strong reply:

On his return from Gilgit, Murad Khan sent this message to Imam Quli Khan: "Why have you disobeyed me? Are you not afraid of my army or of my blood-stained sword? If you hold your life dear and love your country, give me all revenues of your land and send your people to serve me. Certain borders of your land are my borders and any interference will be your fault. Present yourself wherever you are required. If you disobey, you cannot escape my sword. I command you to appear before me in Skardu to gain my mercy. Send one of your men with your submission if these conditions are acceptable to you. If even one of the conditions are not met, you are not safe and I shall destroy your land. I shall also imprison your friends. You are aware that Gilgit and Rondu both belong to me, while Khapulu and Poreg are at my feet. Beggars and kings bow before me. You have seen how I have destroyed the enemy in Gilgit. If you too are insolent, expect nothing but suffering from me."

Quivering with rage, Imam Quli Khan replied: "Why have you become so insolent? Have you forgotten your past condition when you slept on a dirt floor and had a stone as your pillow? You were imprisoned in a cell in Old Tibet (Ladakh), where you had only air to eat and worshipped idols instead of God. I rescued you from this prison, supported you with wealth. You have gained so much honour because of me and would have rotted in prison if it hadn't been for me. Gauge your own worth and do not talk insolently to your betters. My sword enabled you to control Khapulu and Poreg. Kartakhshah and Rondu were captured because of me. I conquered Baroshal and Gilgit with my sword and gave them to you. Now that all is secure, you seem to have no other thought than to attack me. You are like the devil who in his lust to devour makes no difference between his own and others. I do not fear your sword and you are aware of mine. If you attack my land, my warriors will put you to shame. The rulers of Hindustan are aware that I am one of Shah Jahan's allies. You have no right over my country. You may raise your sword against me, but remember that I have never been your slave or dependent."

Almost drowning in mortification, Murad Khan read the feelings of his friends from their faces. They said: "What advantage did you seek in trying to threaten Imam Quli Khan? He has always gone out of his way to help you, suffered hardships for you and helped you against your

enemies. Don't think him to be like the other enemies whom you crushed with ease. He has contacts with the Emperor of Hindustan and the matter will reach the Emperor's ears if you invade Shigar. This can do you great harm; it is better to use wisdom to overcome your enemy."

Murad Khan asked, "What is this wisdom you recommend?" and they replied, "Settle the matter by going to Kashmir. There we can tell the ruler that Imam Quli Khan does not support us in carrying out the wishes of the Emperor and disobeys the Imperial Farman. The matter will be resolved and you will strike fear in the heart of your enemy. Waging war against him would be a grevious error."

Murad Khan lodges a complaint in Kashmir against Imam Quli Khan:

Nawab Saif Khan was ruler of Kashmir in those days. Murad Khan related the concocted story to him and said, "Imam Quli Khan's father and grandfather have always submitted to me and I have given him all the honour he now has, but he is planning to attack me."

Saif Khan wrote a letter to Imam Quli Khan: "Listen carefully, for I have a few questions to ask you. Murad Khan has lodged a complaint before me that you did not accompany him to Gilgit and put obstacles in his way instead of aiding him. He went to Gilgit to put down a rebellion and says he had no other advantage or purpose of going there other than securing the area against rebels.

Secondly, Murad Khan says that your elders have always submitted to him and that even you have been regularly paying homage to him. It is only recently that you have transgressed his commands.

For the above reasons, Murad Khan wishes our permission to punish you. We have told him that it is not correct for him to expect homage from you, as you owe allegiance to Shah Jahan only. He should not expect gifts from you as you send them to us. Give an answer to these questions without delay."

Imam Quli Khan wrote back: "My elders never submitted to Murad Khan. What does he seek within my borders? Kinship and personal acquaintanceship caused me to be well-disposed to this wretch. My help has ensured that he is the ruler of the country. I secured his release and the

release of his family from the prison in Old Tibet. The strength of my arms won him victories over his enemies. He has always asked for military help from me and I have always supported him. Now that no territory near him remains unconquered, he has become drunk with victory and has turned on me.

It is true that I did not accompany him to Gilgit because his actions there were questionable. He accepted countless wealth and jewelry from Habib Khan, although the latter was his son-in-law. If Gilgit is an ally of Hindustan, why has the Imperial treasury not benefited from this wealth? If he had actually given this wealth or a part of it to the Emperor, I would truly have been at fault in not having aided him in his Gilgit venture. He has swallowed all the wealth and jewelry. I do hereby submit this petition in the name of the Emperor of Hindustan and request it to be forwarded."

The Nawab read this and summoned Murad Khan: "Why did you lie to me and why have you interfered in the private affairs of other people? You have brought in the Emperor's name in your petition, but I can find nothing there except your own guilt. You threaten people with force and make useless talk. I command you to swear before me that you will not do Imam Quli Khan any disservice in future. If you harm a single hair of his body or raise a hostile eye towards him, you will have to reckon with my sword: I will send countless armies to reduce your country to dirt which will be scattered in the river and your fort will be picked up and thrown to the sky."

In great fear, Murad Khan hastily swore that he would act according to the orders of the Nawab. He took his leave and went back to Skardu. The Nawab wrote back to Imam Quli Khan: "Murad Khan has been made to swear that he will not trouble you in any way. He will be punished severely if he goes back on his word."

The death of Murad Khan:

On his return to Skardu, Murad Khan continued to behave in much the same manner as before, trying to extract some advantage or the other from Imam Quli Khan. This went on for a few years. Then the will of God caused him to fall ill and he died after three months of suffering.

Ali Shah's treachery:

As is the custom of the world, Murad Khan had handed his sons to Ali Shah with the instruction that he should care for them after his death. The wily Ali Shah paid no attention to this and secretly sent a message to Sher Khan: "Are you aware of our condition? Autumn has come to our garden. The cypress tree has been felled by the cold breath of death. Although he desired that I be his regent till his sons come of age, I have no desire to do so. The royal crown suits you. Although you are younger than I, you are my mentor in terms of knowledge and wisdom. Your son-in-law Mohammad Rafi is already your slave. You can do what you wish with the fort and Murad Khan's children. All possible worldly wealth and honour here is at your feet, but remember that you will have great difficulty on the day of judgement."

Sher Khan understood the import of Ali Shah's message. Happiness and indecision affected him strangely: all colour left his face while longing for power made him weep till his eyes were dry. He summoned his ministers to share the secrets of his heart and to benefit from their advice. Worldly-wise and tough men like Hasan Quli and Qasim came to him. He related the contents of the letter. There was much mourning when the news of Murad Khan's death was revealed and much rejoicing when the rest of the letter became known. They all prayed for Sher Khan, saying, "May you never be separated from wealth and empire. Leave the land of Kartakhshah, which is as narrow as a grave. May your cup always be full of wine when you enter Skardu. Since God has given you such a beautiful land and such a magnificient city, it is not good to delay, or someone else may seize the opportunity. As soon as you are in control of the fort, treat the people well so that no-one should think of opposing you. When you are firmly in power and your feet are stably on the land, act with severity. As Mohammad Rafi is your son-in-law, we hope he will not disobey you. If he does, he must be forced into obedience. Razi Khan and Daulat Khan are both minors and it will not be necessary to put pressure on them."

Sher Khan's attack on Skardu on the pretext of condolence:

Worry left Sher Khan's face at the advice of his ministers. He readied his army and like the wind of

autumn, left for Skardu. On reaching the borders of Skardu, he began to worry and wondered whether the people would treat him with friendship or hostility. He reached the base of the fort engrossed in his thoughts. People streamed out of the fort with loud cries of sorrow. At this, Sher Khan assumed a sorrowful face, though there was cunning in his heart. Under the guise of a mourner, he entered the fort and managed with his sweet tongue to hide the falsehood in his heart so successfully that he appeared sincere. The fame of his goodness and piety spread throughout the land and people came to pay homage to him. Having thus established himself, he threw off his guise, arrested Mohammad Beg and other supporters of the late Murad Khan and imprisoned them. Many people were banished by him and they sought refuge in Shigar.

Sher Khan's Shigar Campaign:

After having usurped the throne of Skardu, Sher Khan followed in the footsteps of his brother and prepared to attack Shigar, forgetting both the tenets of his faith and the promises made in the past. He collected ten thousand soldiers from Kartakhshah, Poreg, Khapulu, Baroshal, Gilgit and Kharbo, and set out from Skardu.

On the other side, Imam Quli Khan came out like a lion and gave an order: "Let no mercy be shown to this evil man. Sher Khan has turned away from God and his Prophet (peace be upon him), he has broken all promises and started this war." The brave young warriors of Shigar came forward: Hasan Mir particularly inflicted losses on the force from Skardu. Lon-tu-peh Taqi coloured the battlefield with the blood of dead men, Ghota cut off enemy heads like gourds. Datol, Hasan Shamik, Mohammad Qasim, Mira Khor Malik, Naqpo, Hasan Mohammad, Jarbag-lo and others made the enemy reel with losses. The Qalmaqi servants from Kirghizia killed two with each stroke of their swords. Faridun, Ladzen, Dzop-la, Sher Barek, Badshah Quli, Taramta, Dzam Quli and Khan Bahadur Girag entered the battlefield like wild beasts. Shamshad, Folad and Farhad cut the enemies like grass. So fierce was the battle that streams of blood began to flow. The brave warriors of Shigar defeated the army of Skardu and the Sher Khan's army slunk away like a fox from the battlefield of Shigar, struggling weakly to shake off their pursuers. Nevertheless, though the army of ten thousand was beaten back, the outcome of the war was not decided.

Night fell and the brave warriors of Shigar retired to rest in their sleeping quarters. They set out for battle again as the sun rose. Fully armed, the Skardu army advanced again and the defenders scaled a nearby ridge to obstruct the advance. The Skardu army thereupon began looting the village below and escaped by the time the defenders could climb down. Imam Quli Khan's courage had been defeated by the cunning of the enemy. His warriors consoled him, saying that they would try to attack the enemy again under cover of darkness. They launched a sharp attack at night, causing heavy casualties among the enemy, but Sher Khan's tactical advantage remained greater and his advance into Shigar continued.

As relations between Sher Khan and Imam Quli Khan became more strained, the latter's ministers advised him: "Send Amir Khan to Kiris. If the chief of Khapulu brings his forces to move against us, Amir Khan can stop him there." Imam Quli agreed to the plan and sent Amir Khan to Kiris, where Amir Khan occupied it and obstructed the enemy's path.

Amir Khan defeats Babar and beats him back from Kiris

Scarcely was Amir Khan in Kiris when Babar arrived with his army and was met with swords and cannon. Amir Khan captured 120 of Babar's men, causing him great disgrace and sorrow. Babar exclaimed: "I do not care if I lose the battle, but it is against all manhood if I leave my men in the hands of the enemy." His friends advised him to forget the prisoners for the time being and see to his own safety, as the danger of his capture was great. Babar sent a message to Sher Khan: "I am in great danger from Amir Khan, who has cut my forces in two. I have neither the means to fight on nor a way to escape, unless you send reinforcements." Sher Khan immediately sent reinforcements to relieve Babar, permitting the latter to escape to Khapulu.

Meanwhile, Amir Khan heard from Shigar that Sher Khan had attacked and had camped in Kothang. Amir Khan left Kiris and saw on the borders of Shigar a huge army camped at the foothills blocking his way. Putting all thoughts of fear and personal safety aside, he hacked a path through the middle of the enemy and presented himself at the court of Shigar.

Sher Khan stayed two or three days at the first inhabited place in the path of his invasion. He cleared this settlement of all trees, turning a green paradise into a desolate plain. On the fourth day, he gathered his forces and attacked. The warriors of Shigar came out and attacked the enemy column while it was still on its way. There was much bloodshed and the battle slackened as night fell, when Sher Khan summoned his advisors and said, "We are suffering heavy losses and there is no respite day or night." They replied, "We can avoid bloodshed at night by building a fort and use it to overcome the enemy." Sher Khan thereupon laid the foundations of the Bonpja fort, which was constructed in twenty days, causing the destruction of the local rural population. The people of Shigar came to Imam Quli Khan, saying, "If the enemy succeeds in completing the fort, it will be difficult to get him out of Shigar." Imam Quli Khan pleaded restraint and replied, "It is not wise to confront the enemy now, as he is in great numbers and a fight will be inconclusive and bloody. Let us put our faith in God, strengthen our forces and try again when it is opportune. Final victory will be ours and the enemy will be disgraced in defeat."

The Skardu army celebrated the completion of the fort and soldiers said, "God has granted us victory over this land and we shall conquer all the territory in a few days." Sher Khan entered the fort with his army, whereupon the brave warriors of Shigar came out in force to confront the invader. Hasan Mir, Jopla, Badshah Quli, Mohammad Husain, Bahadur Taqi, Qaral Khan and Hatim Jan fought fiercely, while Ghota, Kaljo, Najgo, Vatol, Hasan, Nur Ahmad, Rahim and Halbi fell upon the enemy as a lion falls on a goat. Both Horpanq-po and Hinder-pa sent many of the enemy to the other world, while Gul-mul-knir-pa took out the brains of the enemy soldiers.

Soka-pa decimated the enemy with a rain of arrows. Sani-pa showed the wonders his sword was capable of. In short, each warrior exhibited great feats of bravery on tht day, and closed all paths of retreat for the enemy. They captured many soldiers from Rondu, whom they decapitated with their swords. When Sher Khan came to know of the death of his brave countrymen, he tore his robes in sorrow and rage and ordered that revenge be taken immediately. His forces gathered themselkves together at this. At the forefront of this vengeful force was a man on a fiery charger, wearing a steel helmet, a bow in his hand, a sword at his waist, and

wearing a chain mail shirt interwoven with silk. It seemed that the whole army of Shigar would be overrun by this attack. However, a musket ball hit this brave manand he fell from his horse. Such a rain of musketry then ensured that the enemy was routed and forced to retire into the fort of Bonpja.

On the next day, the soldiers of Sher Khan removed their dead and wounded from the battlefield with cries of sorrow. Sher Khan on seeing this also joined in the mourning. The people said to him: "We have never seen you before in this condition. Our complete army has been cut to pieces in this confrontation. This nation does not seem to know fear of the sword or musket. Their riders are like double-headed snakes. Everytime we meet them in battle, we suffer a setback. How can we fight with such people and how can we saves our lives from their onslaught?" When Sher Khan heard his people say this, he became very sad and apprehesive that he would be captured by the enemy. He showed none of this apprehension to his men, and tried to encourage them instead: "You should not be afraid of the enemy. Changes in fortune are the facts of life. One is at times victorious, and has to suffer losses at other times: such is the way of this world. Time never treats anyone in the same manner as before. In our next battle, we will remove the crown from the head of the enemy. I will now prepare to gather my forces, and we will darken the day into night for the enemy."

Sher Khan sent messengers to every part of this country in order to gather his soldiers. In a few days, many fresh soldiers reached the battle-field. Sher Khan addressing the gathered forces, said: Fight the enemy with all your power. Whoever brings me one head of the enemy will receive gifts and rewards from me; whoever runs away from the field of battle will suffer the penalty of having his head cut off. If the enemy is not shown to be inferior in this battle, I will have to hang my head in shame. I order you to enter the fort of Bonpja silently at midnight, and cut off the heads of the enemy like gourds when he should attack."

The spies of the raja of Shigar brought the news of Sher Khan's speech to his troops, and Imam Quli Khan came to know of the secret plans of the enemy. He immediately sent out his forces in order to prevent the enemy from entering the fort. He sent Hasan Mir to Rondu to block the advance of the enemy and to fight thhe enemy if he should appear. Taqi and other brave men were sent to Bonpja. A

battle started on the next day. Many of Sher Khan's men were killed and his army was beaten back.

The people of Skardu sent a message to Imam Quli Khan: "There is no doubt that you are mighty. There is no-one who can compare with you. We are prepared to be loyal to you, but on the condition that only you should rule us; we need neither Sher Khan nor Mohammad Rafi. We want to be your subjects and we cannot accept two kings in one land." The raja accepted their condition and the people were satisfied.

The people of Skardu all assembled in Kajine and the war ended. Men and material were sent to Skardu on Imam Quli Khan's orders. Imam Quli of Skardu kept Imam Quli Khan informed of the internal situation in Skardu, and requested the despatch of soldiers from Tasiq in order to fight the forces of dissension. The message reached Tasiq, bringing Hasan Mir and Sultan Khan with their army. The raja then said to Sultan Khan: "You will take over the leadership of the Skardu nation. Stayt in Kajine and remain alert at all times." Sultan Khan replied: "I do not have much reliance on the capabilities of this nation. I am always ready to obey all the commands that you issue, but please send me some more men." Thereupon the raja sent Soket along with a hundred soldiers to Sultan Khan.

Certain people in Skardu sent the following message to Sher Khan: "Your brother Imam Quli has joined up with the enemy. He has brought Mohammad Rafi from Parkuta in order to subjugate the people of Skardu under his cover. The raja of Shigar has brought his army here to aid him; but the people of Skardu are not satisfied with the situation and look to you for help. If you come now to this country, we will despatch the enemy to the other world, surround the nefarious elements and kill them."

Sher Khan was overjoyed at receiving this message. He asked for reinforcements from Yaqub Shah, who sent an army with Hatim Khan. Sher Khan reached Rabjah from Kartakhshah and from there onwards to Shigri. He found this place deserted and became apprehensive. As he continued and no one came to meet him from the direction of Skardu, he became uneasy.

Imam Quli learned that Sher Khan had reached Shigri, that Hatim Khan had joined him from Khapulu, but that he had only five hundred soldiers with him without equipment

and supplies. Imam Quli became very worried and went to Raja Imam Quli Khan to express his fears. Imam Quli Khan consoled him and said: "There is no need to worry, respected relative. It was indeed my wish that the enemy comes before me so that I could destroy him. Your own people have called him, but he has come to his own great misfortune: he does not have the strength to confront me successfully, nor is there any way for him to escape. There is no shelter for him other than that of the grave. He had probably thought that the people of Skardu would bow their heads before him, otherwise it would hardly have been possible that the jackal would dare to attack the lion."

When Imam Quli heard this speech from the raja, he thanked him and said that he would make preperations, whereupon Imam Quli Khan replied: "There is no need to send the whole army. Only a few contingents of our army are sufficient." Baghto, Sultan Khan, Hassan Mohammad, Starpa and other brave wariors took their men along with them for the battle. These included not more than a hundred and twenty-five musketeers. As the army approached Sher Khan's camp, they saw that he had entrenched himself and that he did not seem to have very many men with him. Thereupon the armies of Skardu came down from the hill they had been on, took cover behind some rocks, and let loose a fusillade of musketry at the enemy. When this was over, the soldiers mounted their horses and charged the enemy. Among the enemy there was a brave youth by the name of Qalmqani, who was cut down from his horse with the stroke of a sword. This incident caused the enemy to waver, causing them to lose many of their men in the melee that ensued.

There was another battle on the next day. Amir Khan, Hasan Mir, Hatim, Imam Quli, Abulfatah, Sherdil, Mohammad Baghoto, Vatol, Galsangi, Mirakhor Malik, Sultan, all of these brave people reached Shigri, thirsting for battle. From morning till evening these brave people waited for the enemy to come out to face them, but nobody came to confront them from Sher Khan's side. Tired of waiting, the warriors of Skardu challenged the enemy: "You have entered our country from Kartakhshah, now why don't you come out to meet us? You were not aware of the sharpness of our swords. Death has brought you here, otherwise the cowardly Sher Khan would not have dared to come before the lion of Skardu!" Sher Khan on hearing these taunts exhorted his men to advance, but no one moved forward.

On the third day, there was little change. Finally Sher Khan told his soldiers very clearly that any soldier not going forward to meet the enemy would be decapitated personally by him. Upon this threat, his people assembled on top of a hill with their muskets, and a section of these came down from the hill. The army of Skardu saw that the enemy had come out and mercilessly charged the enemy. The enemy ran back up the hill, hotly pursued and finally overtaken by the Skardu army. Three people were killed in the battle. The people (of Skardu) decided that the only solution lay in finishing the enemy once and for all and imprisoning all captives, so that the seeds of strife and dissension would be rendered sterile. However, Imam Quli Khan and Amir Khan stopped the people from this action saying: "The enemy is now at our mercy. There is no way he can escape. There is no point in further bloodshed." At this, the people withdrew and the war came to an end.

News of the battle reached the people in the fort at Skardu continually through their spies, and news of constant defeats made them despair. Food began to get scarce in the fort. Opponents had surrounded and besieged the fort so that thee was no way of coming out to join up with the forces of Sher Khan. Finally Alamir Qasim presented the scheme that the only way of helping Sher Khan would be to attack the opponents independently, causing their forces to divide and encouraging Sher Khan. Acting on this scheme, a force left the fort of Parkuta for Kadjina to fight Shah Sultan. Shah Sultan came out of his fort to give battle to these people as soon he heard of their arival. Bahadur Soket also came out with him. Therre was a short fight, and the invaders scatterd after the first attack, running as a deer runs at the sight of the hunter. Three or four of them fell under a hail of bullets. Qasim´s son who was present there, tried to rally his men but to no avail, and fell down, seriously wounded by a bullet discharged by one of Sultan Khan´s brave soldiers. His men did not leave their leader in the battlefield, but picked him up and carried him back to his father, who seeing the condition of his son, wept tears of blood. Imam Quli Khan heard of this fight and immediately sent supportive reinforcements to Shah Sultan. Shah Sultan was pleased to see these reinforcements and sent a letter to Imam Quli Khan thanking him and adding: "I have already destroyed the enemy." Imam Quli Khan was satisfied with this conduct and congratulated his brother-in-law (wife´s sister´s husband) upon his feat.

Sher Khan sent the following message to his brother Ali Shah in Rondu: "Hatim Khan of Khapulu has entered the border of Kvardu with his own army as well as the army of Shigar. The enemy has more men than ours. it is difficult to save one´s life at this juncture. If my respected brother can send aid at this delicate moment, there is hope of safety, otherwise it would be difficult to escape from the clutches of the enemy."

Ali Shah became angry upon receiving this message, and immediately gave orders for the mobilisation of his army. As soon as his army was mustered, he set off in the direction of Skardu. Imam Quli Khan received the news that Ali Shah had come to the aid of his brother Sher Khan. He sent out thirty-four musketeers with Targhpa in order to block Ali Shah´s advance. Behind this contingent he sent Ali Noor as a backup defence. When these people reached Kachura, they met Ali Shah´s army and a battle started. Many men of Rondu were killed. When Ali Shah´s saw this, he could envisage no other solution apart from flight. He retreated from Kachura and was preparing for his escape through the Basho route when his companions stopped him and said: "Your brother is at this time surrounded by the enemy. If you have any sincerity, you will not leave your brother in the lurch. Apart from that, Imam Quli Khan is famous for his mercy to a fallen foe. When She Khan despairs of any help from any side, he will give himself up to Imam Quli Khan, who will surely forgive him his transgressions and give him shelter. A friendship will spring up between these two, but then Sher Khan will become your enemy. The result of this will be difficulties fo you and the destruction of your country."

Ali Shah approved of this advice, and told his soldiers that it was essential to reach Skardu to help Sher Khan, but asked "The enemy has blocked the path to Skardu; how can we reach there?" the soldiers replied: "There is a path through the mountains, where it is not possible to take the horses along, but a man on foot can easily cross over." Imam Quli Khan´s army was not aware of the existence of this route. Ali Shah crossed over using this path and joined up with the forces of Sher Khan.

When Imam Quli Khan heard of this link-up, he became worried. He sought the avice of his ministers. These brave people of Shigar answered with one voice: "As along as we have life in our bodies we will fight the enemy and will not make a move without your commands. If you shed a drop of

sweat, we are prepared to shed drops of blood in exchange." The raja of Shigar was overjoyed at the loyal answer of his people and lavishly rewarded them with gifts. He commanded them: "Let the army be sent forth this very night. Amir Khan should try to reach Kokab this very night." The army thereupon gathered that night and crossed the Indus, reaching a spot by the name of Sariko, and camped there to stop the advance of the enemy.

Two hundred brave men armed with swords hid behind rocks under cover of darkness and attacked the enemy at dawn just like a hungry wolf leaps at the throat of a gont; they blocked off all routes of escape and shed so much blood that the whole plain became red. About four hundred prisoners were captured.

At sunrise, Amir Khan as the commander of the army was given this news: "A magnificent victory has been won; large numbers of the enemy have been killed and the remaining taken prisoner. Provisions, materials of war and much wealth has been captured." This message was relayed to Imam Quli Khan, who expressed delight and satisfaction at this.

Thereafter, the raja of Shigar ordered a canal to be built, tapping the water of the Sat stream and leading it over a large earthen mound . The swift water of this canal cut through the soft earth of the mound and flowed into the Shakam river. Two weeks later, the precipitation of the earth alog the sides of the river caused levees to develop on the banks of the river; three months later, the collection of earth on the banks became large enough to enable a road to be built upon the levee. In this manner, the part of the river that supplied water to the fort rose above the water level through silting and dried up, shutting off the water supply to the inmates of the fort.

Later, a large tower was constructed near the fort, upon which a catapult was mounted. This was used to shower a barrage of stones on the enemy. Musketeers were also housed in this tower, and they also fired shots into the fort occasionally.

However, as the besieged enemy had another alternative supply of water, these measures did not have a very significant effect.

the future as well. If you have any honour in you, remove all thought of the fact that you are his friend and relative, and unite with my forces and with the forces of Sher Khan. I will give you my daughter and your children shall rule in the future. I will make you the chief of Khapulu and also give you the fort of Thorsekhar. What more can you wish or hope for? I will live instead of you in Halde, and give you the total control of my country. Sher Khan is in Kashmir these days. When he returns to his seat of government, you will be successful, as he will reward you generosly and gracefully. He will destroy your enemies. He is in difficulties these days; the enemy has at the moment occupied Sher Khan's land forcibly, and is destroying his well-wishers, but the fort at Skardu is unbelievably strong. I do not think that the enemy can capture the fort. If you come to our aid now, the country of Khapulu is in your hands. It is true that your father died at the hands of Murad Khan and that Sher Khan has made you suffer, but it is now time to forget the unpleasant past. You are a soldier, you should look to the world. You could not benefit from learning and scholarship. It is incumbent upon you seek worldly gain and you should turn your thoughts to the acquisition of kingship; the only condition is that you attack the enemy and capture the fort of Kharko, so that any suspicions I may have about your intentions may be allayed, and all enemies of Sher Khan may be brought to their knees. Do not delay."

Hatim Khan fell into this trap and doubt was removed from his mind. He broke away from the raja of Shigar and went over to the enemy. he sealed a pact of unity with the enemy by placing the Holy Book between himself and the enemy and swearing upon it.

After this, Yaqub Khan advanced upon Kharko with a vast horde; Hatim was also with him. Both of them fought the army of Shigar. Since they were large in number, they were able to besiege the fort and attack it from 11 directions, finally succeeding in capturing it. Amir Khan's whole army was cut to pieces.

When Imam Quli Khan heard of this, he became enraged and violent; he swore: "I will conquer the fort of Skardu by the grace of God! All my opponents shall be destroyed!"

The coming of reinforcements from Gilgit and Nagar:

A young messenger appeared before the raja of Shigar and humbly submitted the information that reinforcements had arrived from Gilgit and Nagar. The commander-in-chief of the armies appeared, kissed the throne, presented gifts, and said: "Rahim Khan and Chilis Khan have sent the following message: "We were but specks of dust, but became bright suns through the power of your love for us. We were helpless in the hands of the enemy; we were separated from our country and relatives: You gave us back our rightful place in our country after releasing us. For this we are very grateful to you."

Shortly after this a few people came and presented themselves before the raja of Shigar. They had been tavelling from Kashmir and their clothes ere travel-worn. They said: "We went with Sher Khan to Kashmir because we feared for our lives. We found out recently that Rafi Khan of Parkuta had come to Tibet and had taken Imam Quli Khan with him; together they had entered Skardu, had occupied the whole kingdom and destroyed all resistance. We were overjoyed at hearing this news, and immediately ran away from Sher Khan." They further told the raja: "Sher Khan given much money to the Nawab of Kashmir and has avoided imprisonment through bribery. He managed to collect this wealth by plundering and killing on the way to Kashmir. He only has a few men with him. It is imperative that he be caught on his way back. He should be given no respite, because things will get difficult if he enters Kartakhshah, since he can get reinforcements from Khapulu and play a hundred different tricks."

The raja of Shigar replied: "I consider such a course of action to be unsuitable. I am not in the habit of inflicting cruelty and suppression, because I believe that God gives no honour or respect to anyone who stoops to using these means. We have nothing to fear from Sher Khan. For this reason, we don´t wish to cause unrest in the country. I am satisfied with my own share, I do not want more, since ambition and greed are of no use. Mohammkad Rafi has suffered from Sher Khan´s actions; Skardu shall be ruled through his orders. Sher Khan´s entry to Kartakhshah does not concern me in the least. I am not ambitious, nor am I opportunistic. If he chooses to pitch camp in Kartakhshah, it is not our business; it will, however, be our great concern if he turns his attention to Skardu again."

Then the raja summoned Imam Quli and told him the facts: "Sher Khan has entered Kartakhshah. This has caused worry. He will get reinforcements from Khapulu and will definitely get help from Yaqub Khan. One must think of a solution for this problem soberly." Imam Quli suggested : "Let a command be issued ordering the whole army to collect tomorrow morning. People should be warned that those who refuse to join these ranks will be beheaded. They would collect in Kajine, and later send their dependents back to Skardu. Such a clear-cut command will leave little room for malingerers to escape."

The plan was accepted, and arrangements were made accordingly, messengers being sent to all parts of the land to bring the men together. A large army gathered as a result in Sandos. The raja made the following speech to the gathered multitudes: "You have been given this inconvenience because the enemy has come near, and is bent upon waging war against you and us. This is why it is incumbent on us to try to thwart him with our combined strength. If we remain united, wye have nothing to fear from the enemy. It has come to our knowledge that Sher Khan has reached Kartakhshah, and has requested for reinforcements from Yaqub Khan. We do not care about these empty movements. You will see how ridiculous it is in a few days. With the help of God, we will lay the enemy flat upon the ground. I feel sorry that you have been called in these difficult conditions, but I only wished to take all doubts from your hearts. You do not need to fight. I do not wish to burden you with war. My own army is enough to confront Sher Khan and defeat him."

The people replied: "We are there to serve you. To fight this enemy is our job. How can this piece of tinder dare to attempt a fight with fire? As long as we are there, no enemy of Skardu will be allowed to spread strife and dissension here."

The raja spoke again; "No matter how lowly the enemy is, one must never be contemptuous of him. Keep in mind your own self-esteem on the day you confront the enemy."

The people replied: "You gave Mohammad Rafi advice, and he mauled the enemy. God will reward us since we are your followers. If you order us to sit upon fire, we are ready to do so. Anyone who dares to disobey your commands will have to reckon with our swords."

On hearing this, Imam Quli Khan turned to Mohammad Rafi Khan and said to him: "One must never trust this nation. Their whole system of beliefs and ethics is erroneous. Constancy is unknown to them. They saw that we are prepared to fight, so they swore to support us since they saw no other way. It is imperative that you become my friend and companion so that the throne and crown of this place goes to you, otherwise the chances of your kingship are few. You have no idea of the intrigues of people, you are still a child and not wise to the ways of the world. You have no experience. How can young people understand the experience of older men? I have said what I wanted to say. it is good to heed the words of one´s elders:

When Mohammad Rafi heard this from the raja, he said humbly: "The two brothers of my father have sworn before God, and my father´s ministers have also sworn that they would never accept any ruler other than I, and further that they would never disobey my commands. I trust these people completely. Your mentorship has given me hope, and I will never forget the favour that you did to me as long as I live."

He then kissed the hem of the raja´s garment, apologised that he could not serve him sufficiently, took his army with him and headed for the borders of Skardu. Imam Quli Khan also left and returned to Shigar.

Before proceeding further, Mohammad Rafi went to the shrine of his father and went round it several times (Tr.:this is a token of homage). After he had completed his rounds of the grave, Sher Khan appeared to meet him. He kissed Mohammad Rafi Khan and embraced him, saying: "You have solved my difficulty and saved me from the clutches of the enemy. May God the Merciful give you a long life. You are the light of my eyes. Only a fool would destroy his own eye. Words tricked me into this folly that I have committed, and now I have to humble myself before my loved ones. Forgive me my misdeeds of the past; I congratulate you on your accession to the throne of your father. I will take leave immediately and go to Kartakhshah."

The people put Mohammad Rafi Khan on the throne with great pomp and honour, and all of them bowed their heads before him. They swore loyalty to him. Sher Khan´s expresion of gratitude removed all traces of suspicion from Mohammad Rafi´s heart. Sher Khan became Mohammad Rafi´s elder and

mentor. All this, however, was only trickery and cunning. Sher Khan's heart was full of treachery: soon after these declarations of gratitude, he bit like a poisonous snake and imprisoned the raja of Skardu.

The moment Sher Khan put Mohammad Rafi in prison, the people of Skardu immediately became loyal to the usurper. His wazir was Qasim. Qasim said: "Ismail is the viceroy in Kiris. Amir Khan is not present in this country at the moment. Ismail Mir is an old acquaintance of mine, I am sure he will do what is told to him. You should send him a messenger telling him to come to Skardu to express his loyalty. If he comes, I will welcome him with respect, and marry my daughter with his son." Night fell, and a messenger was despatched to Kiris. On hearing the message, all fear of God left the heat of Ismail Mir, and he prepared to break the trust put in him. He told the messenger to return immediately, give his greatings to Sher Khan and tell him this: "You are our king, I am your slave. I will obey every command that you send me. I have much hope in your generosity. Our relationship is a source of honour for me. The best course of action is that you send your wazir Qasim in some way along with an army. He should cross the river at night and hide in some place. He should then inform me of his location. I will come out of the fort, bringing with me those people I have doubts about and make a place in the house for you."

Sher Khan became excited when the messenger returned with this proposal. At nightfall, he sent his wazir with an army to the country of Kiris. In his heart, he still had the apprehension that this may be another trick of the enemy. he therefore sent another messenger to Ismail Mir so that he could gauge the true situation there. When the messenger went there, he was welcomed in a warm manner by Ismail Mir, who said: "Come with me, I will show you round the place so that your suspicious are allayed and you are reassured." Both entered the fort together, and the messenger saw that Ismail Mir had remained true to his word. Also, his men were loyal to him. Upon observing clear proof of Ismail Mir's sincerity, the messenger returned to the wazir Qasim and praised Ismail Mir highly. Qasim was then satisfied and gave the order to his army to move forward and occupy the country of Kiris. When the army reached Kiris, Ismail Mir opened the gate of the fort true to his word, and let Qasim in. They both became true friends. Morning came, and the inmates of the fort were startled to see the changed state of

affairs. They could neither escape nor stand and fight, leaving them no choice but to express their loyalty to Qasim. For this reason, they expressed great happiness on seeing Qasim.

One of the inmates, however, remained loyal: he slipped out of the fort secretly, went to Shigar, and related the whole story to Amir Khan, saying at the end: "The monster has taken hold of the golden city. Spring left Amir Khan's face and autumn appeared on his countenance. The idiocy of the viceroy of Kiris and Sher Khan's occupation of the country caused the raja of Shigar to sigh deeply, he summoned Amir Khan and spoke to him: "There is no need to worry; if the enemy plucks two apples from our garden, it does not harm us. People who keep to the right path will never have autumn in their garden. Sher Khan also came to our country earlier, and was duly punished by God. Now he has started intriguing and plotting against us again. You will see the work of the Omnipotent Creator when the enemy is humiliated again. The enemy's wealth is forbidden to us. I see no way oout of this situation other than war. The only solution for the head of a poisonous snake is a heavy stone. If he suffers now, we cannot be held responsible for this. He will receive the just punishment for his misdeeds, and for this we shall have to exercise patience, since it is not our way to exercise suppression unnecessarily."

Sher Khan's ambitions soared after the conquest of Skardu and Kiris. He sent this message to Babar Khan: "I have conquered Kiris with the might of my sword. You must prepare your army so that we can march on Shigar to dethrone this person who wishes us ill and banish him from the country. Meet me with your army when you get this message."

Babar wrote back: "I am already having great problems. The fear of the Ladakhi Buddhists is always in my heart on account of their strength and the fact that my country adjoins theirs. Everyone is against me these days and the Raja of Shigar recently warned me that he will march into my country if I move out of it. I am thus sending you a small armed contingent, which I hope is enough to make the enemy despair."

Sher Khan was sobered by this reply. Meanwhile, spies of Shigar informed their raja: "The enemy is making plans against you. Be aware and make plans for your defence." The raja of Shigar summoned Amir Khan and his othe

ministers, saying, "The enemy plans to attack us again. He has sent a message to Babar asking for a military alliance, which Babar refused because of his fear of attack from Ladakh. Furthermore, the three sons of Rahim Khan are causing unrest in his country. He has sent a small contingent from Khapulu to aid Sher Khan. We must lay a trap for them and capture them on their way."

Amir Khan and the other brave men answered: "We are here to serve and obey, but it would not be wise to risk a war now, for Mohammad Rafi can be defeated by cunning. We should be so friendly to him that he suspects nothing, after which we shall carry you back as our leader to Skardu."

This plan was agreed upon and Amir Khan and a companion went to Mohammad Rafi, saying: "The light leaves our eyes when we do not see you and are grateful to God that he has enabled us to see you again. There is light in our eyes and comfort in our hearts now that we have seen you. We are prepared to give up our lives in order to keep you happy and have come to ease your problems. The enemy is now under you. We congratulate you on your accession to the throne of your father. The obedience and respect of the Raja of Shigar is our duty, for it was through his good offices that you came to rule over this land and defeated the enemy a hundred times. Let us now heed him by becoming prayerful and pious. Let us place the Holy Book between us and agree to a mutual loyalty. Our armies will then be at your service, you will be free of suspicion and fear, all will become your allies and both friend and foe will consider it an honour to serve you."

Mohammad Rafi sprang into the air for sheer joy when he heard this. His heart was greatly satisfied with these words. He gathered his army and presented himself before the Raja of Shigar.

It is related that at this, Sher Khan demobilisied his army at Kartakhshah, continuing onwards with only a few men. Everyone ignored him and it is said of him: "He let his soldiers go and went with only a few men. He was perfectly healthy, but he made himself ill."

Author's Commentary:

This occurred probably in 1075 AH, when the Emperor of Hindustan sent Nawab Saif Khan to Mohammad Shafi with the orders to punish Veldan Namgyal, Raja of Ladakh. The following account in the Shigar-Namah begins with the contents of a letter that was probably written to Babar by the commander of this punitive expedition:

"I have reached Poreg with much difficulty and I shall slit the bellies of the infidels with my sword. I shall free all the Musalmans that he (the Raja of Ladakh) has imprisoned and purify the land from all unbelievers. However,1 shall forgive them if they accept the word and faith of Islam. I have sworn to conduct myself in this manner so that God rewards me for my actions. Sher Khan has also been called upon to join the Imperial Army and he has replied that it would be an honour for him to serve with me. We should move forward soon so that we can unite and destroy the forces of dissension, falling upon them like two lions. I am not acquainted with the route, so you should come with the armies to my aid. If I win a victory through the help of my companions, I shall reward them with much honour and status and commit no act that would be repugnant to them. Trust me, for you can only expect to gain from me. May my life be unhappy if your rights are infringed by my actions."

Sher Khan was pleased to hear this. He had with him a piece of crystal rock, priceless and perfect as a pearl. He presented this irreplaceable gem to a pleased Nawab. He sent one Ali Quli Khan for the campaign against Ladakh. On his way back from Ladakh, Sher Khan brought Ali Khan to Kartakhshah and caused a palace at Gol to be constructed. (Author's Note: The Shigar-Namah gives no clue to the identity of Ali Quli Khan).

It is pertinent here to reproduce the traditional account of Sher Khan's attack on Ladakh:

Sher Khan, after settling matters in Chagtan and Bodhkharbo, marched to Ladakh and reached Atangmogang after looting and killing on the way. He put the fort there to fire and sword and went on to destroy the fort of Bazgo as well. He took all the booty with him to Skardu. On his way back, the people in Gargono told him that it would be unpropitious for his country if he took the booty looted from the Buddhists there. They said it would be better for him if he hid it somewhere inside Buddhist territory in a place not

known to anyone. Another version of the same event relates that he was chary of sharing his loot with the rest of his army and had planne to hide it in order to collect it for himself later. Whatever the reason, it is related that he sent his most trusted men to a narrow gorge between the cities of Garkono and Chakes on the left bank of the Indus to hide the treasure there. After they had carried out his orders, he had them pushed over a high cliff into the next world, thus keeping the secret with himself alone.

Even today, the people refer to the gorge and cliffs as "Maqpon-i-sera", meaning "the Treasure of the Maqpon". (Author's note: I went in search of the treasure, but found no sign of it, though I searched long and hard. It is possible that Sher Khan may have secretly removed it later or someone else found it).

The Shigar Namah continues with the narrative:

Troubled by the incursions and attacks by Sher Khan, the Raja of Ladakh sent a messenger to Shigar: "Forgive my past mistakes. Sher Khan troubles me greatly and I have never seen a more quarrelsome person before in my life. I feel a strong repulsion towards him and am ashamed of being his relative. The weight of this shame has not lifted from my heart, though I have severely mauled his army. I wish your son to marry my daughter to double our unity through such a link. Then we can together punish this evil character."

The Raja of Shigar wrote back: "No matter how one treats a piece of sandstone, it can never become a ruby, but friendship and unity is good for all times and can be strengthened without any further measures." Deeply dissappointed by his reply, the Raja of Ladakh turned away from the Raja of Shigar. With the intention of giving aid to Hatim Khan, he attacked Khapulu, giving the Mussalmans cause for worry. Yaqub Khan managed with strategy to expel them from Khapulu, whereupon Hatim Khan wrote to him, "Why have you expelled our army from your land? Did you not think of my brother-in-law's sword?" Yaqub Khan replied, "Do not boast of your brother-in-law. The cruelty of the Ladakhis has set my heart aflame and I separated myself from the Gyalpo." Enlightened friends of Yaqub Khan supported him and said, "You have done well to expel the infidel armies, since their aim was to murder you and give Hatim Khan control over Khapulu."

Yaqub Khan was angered by this and resolved to wage a campaign against Hatim Khan. His army left Khapulu and gathered near the border at Saling, besieging the fort there. The people of Saling were defeated and Yaqub Khan captured the fort. Leaving a few men to hold it, he moved onwards to Halde, where Hatim came out of the fort with his army. A bloody battle followed and Hatim retreated. Yaqub stormed the fort, broke the gate down and entered it. They started looting and killing, whereupon Hatim launched another strong attack and pushed Yaqub's army out of the fort. Seeing this setback, Yaqub retreated to Khapulu.

Yaqub's destructive campaign made Hatim think: "My brother-in-law has accepted the suzereignty of the Raja of Shigar despite his own foresight and vision. It will be advantageous for me to do the same, as my enemies will then fear me." Acting on these thoughts, he sent one of his most experienced ministers with this message: "Please forgive me my sins. I remained ignorant of the necessity to be loyal to you, but I rule this land only because of your generosity towards my father. Being unwise and forgetting those times, I have been friendly with the Gyalpo of Ladakh, but even God accepts repentance. Forgive me my transgression. I place myself under your command and may I be a man without religion if I go back on my word."

The Raja of Shigar was touched by the humility of the request and forgave Hatim with this reply: "Have no fear. You have turned away from idols and turned your face to God. I am your sincere friend and ally."

Yaqub learned of this and apprehensively wrote to the Raja of Shigar: "Cast your merciful gaze upon me as a father to his children and save me from the infidels." The lion-hearted raja replied: "Do not be ashamed of your battle with Hatim. Have no designs on anyone else's land and no one will take your land. All evil comes from intrigues and plots." In this way, strife in Khapulu came to an end.

Ahmad Mir was the Raja of Kiris. He had two sons, Amir Khan and Hatim Khan. The father split the land in two, giving Kiris to Amir Khan and Koru to Hatim Khan. A discrepancy in the size of these in the size of the endowment caused a quarrel between the sons. Amir Khan went to Shigar and complained to the raja there, while Hatim Khan went to Khapulu. The Raja of Shigar besieged the fort at Kiris to arrest the unjust father. The fort capitulated and Kiris was

given to Amir Khan. Both brothers then professed their complete loyalty to the Raja of Shigar, who gave them his blessings.

Amir Khan died in Kharko and his brother Hatim Khan broke with Imam Quli Khan, going over to Sher Khan. His action was comparable to one who eats salt out of a cellar and then breaks the cellar. He joined Sher Khan in an attack on the Koru fort. Sher Khan was unable to succeed against the fort, which was under the command of Mir Mulk. When the commander was transferred elsewhere, Sher Khan's spies told him, "Now is the time to attack." Hatim Khan attacked at night. The occupants pretended to be asleep, but they were expecting the attack and vowed loyalty to Hatim Khan, who secured the fort. He released the commander of the fort who had been sent by the Raja of Shigar, saying: "I have eaten much salt from the Raja of Shigar and will not forget his favours to me as long as I live. I only wishe to have my land and I have no further designs now that I have found it."

The raja heard of the attack and occupation and came out at the head of a punitive expedition. He summoned Mohammad Rafi and the combined armies camped near Nar. Imam Quli Khan stopped at Skardu to continue the siege of Kharpoche and sent Bahram Khan and Hasan Vatol to Koru with the order to tear out the standing crops and destroy all trees.

Sher Khan learned of this and came out with an army from Kartakhshah, making first halt at Parkuta. He sent Aziz Khan and Qasim to help Hatim Khan, who was greatly relieved when he saw them cover one flank in Koru. In a hard battle where both sides showed great valour and courage, the armies of Kartakhshah attacked the Shigar army. Sher Khan's forces suffered a defeat. Qasim Khan, shaken by the news, sent a message to Sher Khan through an experienced holy man: "We are not able to defeat the enemy in the battlefield. It would be best to send Ali Quli Khan so that he can defeat the enemy with his cunning. Then the people of Shigar will go over to him." Accordingly, Ali Quli Khan was sent to the battlefield and he sent this message to the Shigar troops: "Whoever supports us will get a reward from us and will be rich; anyone fighting us will be beheaded." His spies disseminated this message to every person in Shigar, to the rich and poor alike. The Shigar Namah makes no mention of the amount and nature of the reward.

Imam Quli Khan had had no success at the fort of Kharporche till that time. The defenders of the fort held out for seven months. However, their resolve began to flag as food grew scarce, as even the strength of the fort's walls could not replace the weakness caused by hunger, and the troops inside became tired, saying to Qasim: "Go to Imam Quli Khan so that we may preserve our honour as well as yours. Take Sher Khan along with you. There is no disadvantage in this step. If you do not do as we tell you, we are all ready to swear an oath of loyalty to Imam Quli Khan." Qasim immediately set out from the fort on hearing this and reached Sher Khan's camp on the same night, where he related the story to Sher Khan. Sher Khan was deeply troubled by this news. On hearing this, Ali Shah came to Sher Khan as well. When the details were revealed to him, he too became depressed. After giving the matter much thought and deliberation, Ali Shah said to Sher Khan: "I have no quarrel with the Raja of Shigar. We have never suffered on account of each other. If you accept what I say, I am prepared to act as a messenger between you and the raja." Sher Khan replied: "I am prepared to accept this condition." Thereupon Ali Shah said: "I will send a messenger to the raja as an experiment. If he accepts my conditions, then I will meet him in person."

After conferring with Sher Khan, Ali Shah called one of his reasonable men and told him: "Go to the Raja of Shigar. Convey to him my greetings and good wishes and tell him that his brother-in-law Ali Shah is restless and eager to see him. He has never done you any harm. If your other brother-in-law Sher Khan is your enemy, I am prepared to come before you and take the consequences. Sher Khan is ashamed of his conduct. The thought of war has left his heart and he is now inclined to peace. It is my humble request that his misdeeds be pardoned. I am prepared to present myself for the purposes of making peace between you both. I hope that you will accept my proposal. Sher Khan is your brother-in-law, and one should give concessions to brother-in-laws. Mohammad Rafi is only a child, one cannot expect any wisdom from him."

The messenger went to the Raja of Shigar and related the message to him, upon which the raja replied: "I am not willing to make peace with you on your terms, I have decided to choose war. You have committed cruelty with Mohammad Rafi and taken his rightful land away from him. I can give the fort of Kartakhshah to Sher Khan, but Mohammad Rafi's father's fort belongs to Mohammad Rafi. There is no

sense in discussing this matter any further." Ali Shah was sad and astonished on receiving this reply.

Sher Khan was greatly depressed when his hopes for peace dissappeared. He summoned Ali Shah and said; "I am at the mercy of demons in this place. My family is seperated from me. I get no news of their welfare and they have no news of mine. All this is very distressing." Ali Shah replied: "One should not allow such things to disturb oneself. Call your wazir, he will give you pious advice." The wazir Qasim was summoned and asked what he thought of the matter. He replied: "There is no cause for distress, leave the whole matter in my hands and I will arrange everything. I will send the besieged troops food. Once the suffering of hunger is over, the danger will also be over."

Sher Khan was greatly relieved to hear this answer. At nightfall, Qasim called forty workers, loaded them with sacks of grain and sent them to the besieged fort. They made their wasy through the mountains, but were surprised by the enemy at Marpal. Some of them were killed, others captured, but some managed to escape under cover of darkness and tell Sher Khan about the misfortune that befell them; all the grain had been captured by the enemy. Sher Khan was in a violent fit of rage and desperation, but Imam Quli Khan was very pleased with what had happened and praised his men accordingly.

As food supplies dwindled in the fort, the people began to fear for their lives. Aziz Khan and all his men set out to forage for food. After much searching they found two or three granaries near the area of Bagh Ghord. When the contents of these were distributed among nine hundred men, each received not more than one seer (about one kilogram). Two or three days were spent in this manner, after which the suffering of hunger started again. When no means for procuring more grain seemed possible, a general depression settled on the besieged. Aziz Khan told his men; "Now it is up to you to try," whereupon they replied: "Where is there an opportunity to try?" Aziz Khan advised: "Forage in the direction of Jina. People keep travelling along this route from Sandos. Probably they have the solution to our suffering."

A few people set out in this direction with the intention of hiding themselves by the roadside in order to waylay and kill travellers, so that their food could be

stolen. A men came riding by on a horse laden with wholemeal flour and these people came out of hiding to attack him. This man saw his would-be attackers from a distance and ran shouting to his companions. The people of Sandos came out to aid this man and succeeded in taking the loot away from these famine-ridden robbers. A fight then followed in which a few people on both sides were killed. Aziz Khan was very sorrowful at this loss of life. He said: "There seems to be nothing else in my fate besides defeat."

If God the Merciful should give honour to anyone, he does not fall into the *trans of others. For those whose fate has only humiliation, there is no way of altering their fate, not even through pretence and intrigue. Sher Khan had committed much treachery, and he brought suffering upon himself. he did not remain true to his beliefs, and was therefore unsuccessful. He tried to carry out his wishes at the expense of helpless people, which caused his luck to fall naturally into an abyss of misfortune. A dog is better than a person who bites the hand that feeds him. Any person who answers justice with injustice shall come to grief. Sher Khan tried to harm the country of Rafi Khan, the result was misfortune to himself. He committed cruelties in the city of Imam Quli Khan, and suffered humiliation as a result.

As food became even more scarce in the fort, the people became desperate. Sher Khan tried to keep their spirits up through pretence and intrigue, but words cannot fill empty stomachs. A decision to make war had ended in defeat. There was neither a way of escape nor the strength to fight the enemy. He called Ali Shah once more with this message: "I am in the clutches of the enemy, how can I escape?" Ali Shah advise him to send Qasim to the Raja of Shigar with the following: "Enough has happened to me. I am ashamed of mky conduct. Do not kill me. Have pity on my children; if they hear of my death, they will suffer immensely. I will hand the fort of Kharporche to you, and always remain subject to your command. Send me my children from the fort so that my heart is relieved."

Ali Shah added: "You have much trust in Qasim, he should go to the Raja of Shigar and convey this message. It is hoped that he will agree. Your fame for lying has spread far and wide, and one never succeeds by lying. You have always acted on lies, and have solved the difficulties caused by this through your evil conduct. There is no reliance left in your promises. If you do not do what I tell

you, I doubt you can escape from the punishment of the Raja of Shigar."

When Sher Khan heard these blunt words, the veil of ignorance lifted from his mind. He summoned Qasim and sent him with this message, swallowing his pride and enduring the humiliation. When the Raja of Shigar heard of Qasim´s arrival, he summoned his court, with all the commanders of his armies and the officials of state present. A fear and awe came over Qasim at witnessing the might and grandeur of the count. When he finally got the permission to speak, he first kissed the feet of the Raja of Shigar and then the feet of Rafi Khan. After paying obeisance to Imam Quli, Babar and Amir Khan, he humbly delivered Sher Khan´s message.

(Author´s Note: at this stage the sequence of the narrative is broken, but it is later clear that Sher Khan´s children were returned to him, and that Mohammad Rafi became the ruler of Skardu. The Shigar Namah continues at a point where it seems apparently to be an account of Sher Khan´s second attack on Skardu, during which Mohammad Rafi sought refuge in Shigar, Sher Khan tried to have him extradited, and sent Bahram as a messenger for this purpose to Shigar. The rest is as follows:)

When the Raja of Shigar hear the message of Bahram Khan, he pondered over it, then turned to Mohammad Rafi and said: "May your enemies always be subordinate to you. The pain in your heart will be alleviated when you hear what I have to say. Do not believe the smooth words of Bahram. If you fall into the trap of the enemy, it will not bother Bahram in the slightest. His father is such a magician that he can make a hundred branches out of a hair through his magic. He can certainly release his son from th clutches of the enemy, but can cause you to get cut like a gourd. Whatever I have told you is out of love; truthful tal is always bitter, but its results are always sweet. if you agreed to what I have just said, gird up your loins and prepare yourself for war against the enemy and enter Skardu with the force of the sword."

Mohammad Rafi was very happy to hear these words, and his heart was gladdened. He replied: "I am in a moment of great helplessness right now; I can overcome these difficulties if you come to my aid. God will repay you for this kindness." The raja assured him of his help as far as i would be possible.

The raja ordered the army to be ready to invade Skardu and the army moved in that direction. Amir Khan, Hassan Mir, Sultan Khan, Hatim, Vatol, Baghoto, Hasan, Banopa Mohammad, Gul Mulk, Gulsanga, Taqi, Sanipa Bahadur, Hamza, Faridun, Padshah Quli, Sultan Quli, Taramnai, Sherbarik, Toghan, Farhad and Jehangir were in the forefront and following them was the Raja of Shigar with his bodyguard. To his right was Mohammad Rafi, and to his left the earlier mentioned Bahram. In this magnificent array, they set out for Skardu. As they reached the borders of Skardu, the whole plain was filled by their mighty army, disheartening the enemy. When the night had passed and the next day dawned, Imam Quli sent a messenger to the Raja of Shigar: "You have adopted the light of our eyes. Any person who comes to the aid of an orphan is rewarded by God. We hold you in great honour,and if we have made any mistake we beg for your forgiveness. It is not good to delay now. If you help us, Mohammad Rafi will be successful. Advance without any apprehension and free us from this plague. If you are wary of our intentions, we are prepared to swear an oath on the book of God placed between us that there will be no breach of promise on our side."

On hearing this message, the Raja of Shigar said to Bahram: "Have you heard the words of your father?", to which Bahram replied: "There is nothing bad in these words. The enemy cannot combat the Raja of Shigar. All are waiting for you and when you reach your goal, the whole population is waiting to welcome you and to assert their loyalty." Thereupon the raja gave the order for his forces to move into Skardu. When Sher Khan saw the mighty army, a darkness fell on his face.

Sher Khan´ s brother (perhaps Imam Quli) sent the Raja of Shigar a message: "May God be your guide in all that you do, may all your wishes be fulfilled; it our humble desire that you come as rapidly as possible in order to thwart the enemy. Bring Mohammad Rafi with you. We are your subjects and loyal to you, and are waiting for you. Although Sher Khan is my brother, I am weary of his behaviour. *** for this reason I was silent so long. "He tends strongly to evil and crueltty. Weak and helpless people are his prey. He has forced the children of the late raja to work in imprisonment and has insulted all the relatives of the late raja. I tried to stop him from committing these cruelties, but it had the opposite effect and he became my enemy. When Mohammad Rafi escaped from his clutches, I was greatly

relieved. Any person committting cruelty will end up reaping humiliation. He entered your country without reason. It was a foul act and now he is suffering as a consequence. Now is the time to crush the enemy. He does not have the strength to stand up against you. If he committs the folly of war, he will be in your power. By the grace of God, the combined forces of Mohammad Rafi and you are enough to cut off the head of the enemy. Now is the chance to do it you should not miss this opportunity."

When the raja read this message, he was greatly pleased. He turned to Bahram and commanded: "Take the army and move forward", whereupon Bahram answered: "With your blessing, we shall drive the enemy out of the fort of Skardu just as satan was driven out of paradise. As soon as darkness falls, we shall reach the fort; my only precondition is that Mohammad Rafi should come with us, as the loyalty of the people there cannot be relied upon without him. You can join us at the break of dawn. By that time, we shall have deployed ourselves and by the grace of God, we can hold the enemy together."

The raja liked this plan, and Bahram left with the army for Skardu. As the army entered Skardu, all the people gathered around to express their loyalty and forgot their suffering when they saw Mohammad Rafi. As the army continued to move on, Imam Quli and Sultan Khan linked up with them and embraced Mohammad Rafi. Imam Quli Khan also arrived with reinforcements and together they besieged the fort. When Sher Khan saw this he wept tears of blood. He forgot all his cunning; when he could find no avenue of escape, he called one of his ministers and said to aim: "All is lost, what should I do?" The minister answered: "If you show arrogance now, you wil undergo great humilitation. You will have to be more polite and considerate, otherwise you cannot hope for clemency from the enemy. If you have any thought of war, your chances of success are few. It is wisdom to save one´s life if the enemy is too strong."

Sher Khan was sobered by the minister´s words and immediately sent a message to the Raja of Shigar: "Oh light of my eyes, you are a flower in my garden. May your patronage increase and may your enemies always suffer humiliation. If an error has been made by me, I beg for forgiveness. Even God forgives those who are truly repentant. Have pity on my little children and save me from Mohammad Rafi. For God´s sake, do not make mny children orphans. Save

me from the enemy. If I get a guarantee of safe conduct from you, I will immediately leave the fort and go directly to Kartakhshah. I trust you completely, since you are not treacherous. It was my fate to be cruel and cunning. If you help me now at this desparate time and save me from this scourge, I promise I will always remain subservient to you and always carry out your orders, even at the risk of my own life. If I go back on my word, may my face be blackened on the day of judgement."

When the messenger delivered the message to imam Quli Khan, the raja immediately altered his plans. He laid aside his plans for revenge and turned his mind to thoughts of mercy. Addressing Mohammad Rafi, he said: "May God humiliate anyone who mistreats Sher Khan."

(Author´s note: the narrative ends here. it seems that Sher Khan was allowed to leave for Kartakhshah according to his wishes, and Mohammad Rafi placed himself on the throne in the fort of Kharporche. Thereafter, Sher Khan lost all his reputation in Skardu.)

THE DEATH OF ALI KHAN AND BABAR:

Attention is now turned to the situation in Khapulu. Ali Khan fell ill and died; four months later, Babar also fell ill, and was embraced by death soon after. The raja was struck with sorrow at the double demise. He gave the order that this man-eating fort at Khapulu be burnt down and rendered desolate.

SHER KHAN´S INTRIGUES WITH THE RAJA OF LADAKH:

The Buddhists of Ladakh did not remain true to their faith and started making preparations for war, to the great delight of Sher Khan. He sent a messenger to the Raja of Ladakh: "I am your friend and well-wisher, and will be loyal to you as long as I live; my only condition is that you give your daughter in marriage for my son. If you accept this bond, our family is your liege and all of Tibet lies at your feet."

The messenger delivered the above message to the Raja of Ladakh and clarified the internal situation as

well. The raja called his ministers and advisors and read out Sher Khan's message to them; they all replied in unison: "We congratulate you!", and then the raja told the messenger that he had accepted the proposal of matrimony.

The messenger returned from his long journey and gave Sher Khan the reply to the message. Sher Khan became drunk with happiness and made preparations for the marriage. He sent his son to Ladakh in order to consummate the marriage, but along with this, he sent the Raja of Ladakh a request for ten thousand soldiers so that he could lay Skardu and Shigar waste and destroy his enemies. The Raja of Ladakh hid his head in shame when he received this request.

While this was happening, the people of Skardu came to Imam Quli Khan of Shigar with a complaint against Mohammad Rafi Khan. He said to them with great patience: " If you have been wronged in any way, speak freely. The problem will be solved with the grace of God." The people replied: "O great king, we all dedicate our lives to you. The cause of our distress is two-fold: first, we have not seen our son for many years (Author's note:"son" here probably refers to Sher Khan) and we cannot bear the grief of separation. The second cause of suffering is that every household has to give five turk of wheat to Mohammad Rafi, which is a great hardship."

The Raja of Shigar secretly called Imam Quli of Skardu and Mohammad Rafi Khan and gave them this advice: "Know this: whenever a ruler is cruel to his people, success has turned away from him. Great kings of the past were never too strict with their people and kept themselves informed about the condition of their subjects, because subjects are like the roots of a tree and the ruler is the tree itself. The security of the tree lies in its seed. Your cruelty has caused a problem and it is now time for you to end this cruelty and look to the welfare of your subjects, otherwise you will not be able to flourish in the future. You have all formed an alliance with me and have done away with dissension. The result of this alliance was that all who oposed us were rendered subservient or helpless. I stand by all the promises I have made with you to unitedly combat all enemies, but you wil have to find a way for your subjects who are suffering from your cruelty. It is not right that one lays thorns before one's path with one's own hands."

On hearing this advice from the Raja of Shigar they replied: "Oh great king, as long as there is a sky above

this earth, we are ready to carry out all your commands and wishes at the cost of our lives and hearts. We shall exercise no delay, whatever you order us to do." The raja was satisfied with this answer, and he assured the people of Skardu that their grievance would be redressed. They then went back to Skardu.

SHER KHAN 1680 - 1710

MOHAMMAD RAFI 1710 - 1745

There followed a time of great upheavals, civil wars, invasions from foreign countries, causing great unrest in the lands of Tibet and Poreg. During this time, Sher Khan was the ruler of Skardu between 1680 and 1710 A.D. (approximately), but the civil war continued. I have dispensed with a detailed narrative of these wars. As a result of these wars, Mohammad Rafi was nominated to ascend the throne of Skardu by his rival Sher Khan. Mohammad Rafi's ascension was a peaceful one and Sher Khan retired to Kartakhshah, taking up a peaceful residence there. In the land of Khapulu, Hatim Khan became famous and cleared his path of all rivals. Amir Khan held sway over Kiris, and Imam Quli Khan remained in Shigar as usual. Ali Shah and Shah Sultan ruled over Rondu and Astor respectively.

During this period, the custom of divorce became common in Skardu (Translator's note: the word "talaq" is used, implying that the men divorce the women, and not vice-versa, which would be "khula"). Mohammad Rafi attempted to stop or limit this practice by making it compulsory to pay one tola of gold in excess of the normal "mehr" (bride-wealth). To this day, this is known as the "Rafi Khani Tolu" and this is still a custom among the more traditional families of the region.

After Ali Sher Khan Anchan, the man known by the various names of Mohammad Murad, Murad Khan and Shah Murad became a powerful and famous ruler of Skardu, his fame reaching upto Dardistan. When the author was in Gilgit in 1894, the people used to sing songs about Shah Murad, Sher Shah and Ali Shah. Shah Murad greatly improved the internal administration of the country. He imported masons, stone-cutters, jewellers and cobblers from Hindustan and Kashmir and settled them in Skardu. The use of marble, which is still to be seen in the ruins of some royal buildings, started in

this period. He caused the fort of Mosomahvadangikhar to be built on the cliff above Kharporche. He also constructed the fort at Koru.

This era saw the influences of Shigar on one side and Kashmir & Hindustan on the other for Little Tibet. These influences greatly increased the level of culture and civilization of this country, and Baltistan became synonymous with civilization at that time. The remains of this glorious revolution in culture can be found to this day. In short, Ali Sher Khan Antchan & Shah Murad etc., in Skardu, Imam Quli Khan in Shigar, and Hatim Khan in Khapulu have passed into history as great rulers of Baltistan who are a source of great pride for the land.

SECTION THREE:

THE DECLINE OF THE KINGDOM OF SKARDU:

SULTAN MURAD, RAJA OF SKARDU (1745-1780):

Mohammad Rafi's son Sultan Murad succeeded him as the next Raja of Skardu. An important occurence of his reign is the attack on Skardu in 1193 AH (1779 AD) by Haji Karim of the province of Kashmir. It is related in the tarikh-e-husn by Hasan Shah and in the tarikh-e-kashmir by Fouq that Haji Karim sent Murtaza Khan to invade Skardu. Murtaza Khan was able to succeeed in his task after a hard struggle: he defeated Murad Khan (i.e., Sultan Murad), and returned victorious with much wealth and booty. The governor of the province sent a notification of this victory to the emperor, and received the title of** Subza-ul-Mulk in return.

REIGN OF AZAM KHAN OF SHIGAR (1780 - 1785):

Some time after the above incident, Azam Khan the Raja of Shigar, noting that the country was weakened by the invasions of the Afghans, used this as an excuse to invite Sultan Murad to Shigar. He planned to get Sultan Murad drowned in the river on the way. He had Sultan Murad drowned at the crossing on the Shigar River between Koru and Shigar, and immediately annexed the territory of Skardu into Shigar. he appointed Monepa Ali as the kharpon of Skardu.

At this time, Mohammad Zafar Khan son of Sultan Murad was in Sagarsan. He fled to Poreg and took refuge there for five to six years. During this period, Ali Khan, the brother of the Raja of Shigar returned from a visit to Yarqand via Ladakh. In Poreg, he met Zafar Khan by chance. Zafar Khan related to him the whole tragic story of what had befallen him and the country of Baltistan. Ali Khan expressed sympathy for the young man's plight, but the long journey had exhausted all his resources of wealth. Zafar Khan had also nothing with him. Not being able to bear the shortages of provisions, Ali Khan sent one of his companions Wazir Mohammad with the foster brother of Zafar Khan, one Sosopa to Skardu in order to fetch grain and provisions. Sosopa proved to be treacherous, and instead of procuring grain, he had

Wazir Mohammad arrested and brought before the Kharpon Ali. Monepa Ali immediately informed the Raja of Shigar, who came over to Skardu. The raja had Wazir Mohammad tied to a stake in a clearing and shot to death by arrows. He had Zafar Khan and Ali Khan arrested and extradited out of Poreg. He imprisoned Zafar Khan in the Monkhar of Shigar and had his brother banished into Nagar.

MOHAMMAD ZAFAR KHAN, RAJA OF SKARDU (1785 -1787)

Azam Khan's wife Fakharun Nisa was the sister of Sultan Murad. She was much disturbed by the death of her brother and the destruction of her family; she therefore claimed the area of Barqnao in the region of Koru as her haq mehr (bridewealth according to Islamic law - Tr.) and seceded from her husband. Thereafter she busied herself in plotting and scheming revenge against her husband for the wrongs done to her family. She therefore convinced Mussami Dili, who was the cousin (Mother's sister's son) of Wazir Mohammad and the foster-father of her son Suleman to stage a revolt in Shigar. A revolt ensued, in which the Raja Azam Khan was killed, and Suleman, who was still an unweaned infant, was placed on the throne of Shigar and declared the raja. Mussami Dili was declared the chief minister and regent of the new infant raja. Mohammad Zafar Khan was released from prison and made the Raja of Skardu. No noteworthy incident of his reign in Skardu has come to light.

Ali Sher Khan II (1787 - 1800)

After Mohammad Zafar Khan, his son Ali Sher Khan the second succeeded him. He seperated the region of Parkuta from Kartakhshah and annexed it to Skardu. He then gave Parkuta to his young son Ghulam Shah as a gift.

When Hussain Khan died in Shigar, a quarrel over the succession to the throne broke out between Quli Khan and Azam Khan. Quli Khan was the nephew (Brother's son) of Ali Sher Khan, so Ali Sher Khan helped him and drove Azam Khan out of Shigar to Khapulu. Quli Khan ruled for nine years. Then Azam Khan came with reinforcements from Khapulu and drove Quli Khan out in the direction of Skardu after capuring Shigar. Quli Khan came back from Skardu wih a strong contingent of soldiers and recaptured Shigar, whereupon Azam Khan escaped to Khapulu, only to return a little later with a fresh army, capturing Shigar for the second time. These fights shook the foundations of the three states of Skardu, Khapulu and Shigar.

Ahmad Shah (1800 - 1840)

At the death of Ali Sher Khan, his eldest son Ahmad Shah became the next raja. At this time, Azam Khan, the Raja of

Shigar had died and his son Haider Khan became the raja.

Ahmad Shah sent his nephew (Brother's son) Abdal Khan on a punitive expedition to Khapulu since the inhabitants of Khapulu had started making inroads into Parkuta. The ruler of Khapulu at that time was called Mehdi, a man who had driven his two brothers Daulat Ali Khan and Mohammad Shah out of the country with the help of the Raja of Ladakh and had had them imprisoned in Nobrah. Mehdi inflicted a crushing defeat on the nephew of Ahmad Shah, and captured Abdal Khan along with his captains.

He also had Abdal Khan sent to the prison at Nobrah. Ahmad Shah was distressed when he heard what had become of his nephew and tried to secure the release of the prisoners through diplomatic means: He employed the services of Miladjabar of Kiris to send this message to Mehdi: "If you release the prisoners, I promise never to venture beyond Phungnaqpari." Mehdi refused to release the prisoners, prompting a second letter from Miladjabar: "Release Abdal Khan and I shall give you gold in ransom." This message had the opposite effect, for Mehdi killed Abdal Khan in his cell by hammering a nail into his brain. Abdal Khan was buried in his cell, which was in the Jarmohan street of Taniar, a town in the Dagar District of Nobrah.

Ahmad Shah vowed revenge when he heard of this. He prepared for a long large-scale campaign, even soliciting additional reinforcements from Kashmir, from whence Rafi Malik came with a thousand soldiers. Ahmad Shah attacked Khapulu with these combined forces, defeating Mehdi and capturing him amid much looting, killing and taking of prisoners. Khapulu was then annexed to Skardu and Jol Sharding was appointed governor of Khapulu. Ahmad Shah then returned to Skardu with Mehdi and other prisoners. He had Mehdi imprisoned in a dark well, where his daily diet was fixed at one salty loaf of whole-meal bread and one bowl of water, causing him to die soon after his internment. Khapulu thereafter remained a part of Skardu until Dogra conquest.

The above incident has been related by Fouq in his Tarikh-e-Kashmir as a part of the Reign of Ranjit Singh, when Sher Singh was the Governor of Kashmir (1832 -1834). His narrative runs as follows: "there was unrest in the land, and a battle was going on between Pandit Ganesh and the Raja of Skardu. Finally the Pandit was successful, and the Raja of Skardu was obliged to come to tthe court at Lahore to pay

homage. On his way back to Skardu he found a mine of precious stones. He appointed guards at this place and presented a few pieces of these gems to the Prince-Governor of Kashmir. Sher Singh was greatly delighted by the vast area of land and the mine (this mine was located in Kohistan Astor). He appointed the Pandit as the Master of Mines."
No mention is made of the name of the Raja of Skardu, which makes it difficult to determine who the raja was. Nevertheless, the situation described in Kashmir matches with the time of Ahmad Shah. This incident has therefore been included as a part of the reign of Ahmad Shah by the author of this book.

Ahmad Shah's successor was Shah Murad, but he died before his father. Shah Murad's mother had also died and another wife of Ahmad Shah (the sister of Haider Khan of Shigar, also called Daulat Khatun) had much influence in the royal palace. She used her influence to win over a section of the population of Skardu and coerced Ahmad Shah to supercede his son Mohammad Shah and to nominate his younger son (from Daulat Khatun) as his successor. This selfish act of Daulat Khatun caused much ill-feeling and strife in the palace, the result of which was the destruction of the whole family.

Mohammad Shah was removed from the fort and sent to another settlement in the neighbourhood. He was given money and food, but far below the quality his status demanded. He immediately started intriguing, managing to win over some of the people of Skardu. Ali Sher Khan of Kharmang (i.e., Kartakhshah) also became his ally. A scheme was planned: Doghonipabono would go with Mohammad Shah to the part of Kashmir governed by the Sikhs and ask for help. Accordingly, Mohammad Shah escaped from Gyasar together with Doghonipabono to Kashmir via Josa. Mohammad Shah was sent from Kashmir to the court of Ranjit Singh at Lahore. The Maharaja had already given Gulab Singh the permission to conquer Ladakh and therefore did not consider it opportune to interfere with Gulab Singh's area of influence. He therefore sent Mohammad Shah to Gulab Singh, who in turn sent him to his minister Wazir Zorawar. This happened a the time when Wazir Zorawar was on his way to Ladakh with the Dogra army, so Mohammad Shah met him on the way and set off for Ladakh along with the army. After Wazir Zorawar had conquered Ladakh, he handed Mohammad Shah to Tandof Namgyal Gyalpo in Ladakh with the order that he be well looked after. He probably planned to do something for Mohammad Shah at a later date.

Afer the escape of Mohammad Shah from Gyasar, uneasy relations developed between Ali Sher Khan of Kartakhshah and Ahmad Shah. The relations deteriorated rapidly and eventually made it necessary for Ahmad Shah to invade Kartakhshah. Ali Sher Khan was unable to fight the army of Skardu and took refuge in his fort. The army of Skardu surrounded and besieged the fort. Ali Sher Khan slipped out of the fort with a few trusted men under cover of darkness and fled to Ladakh, where he immediately offered his services to Wazir Zorawar.

Other events relating to the above have already been related in the history of Ladakh during the invasion of Zorawar Singh. The rajas of Astor and Rondu continued to exist as dependencies, and no noteworthy happening during their reign in this period has come to the author´s notice during his research. The author herefore does not deem it necessary to relate the history of each dynasty separately; however, pertinent genealogies have been included. Genealogies of the dynasties in Astor and Rondu have been appended to those of Skardu. Kartakhshah has been handled separately, and the genealogy of Tolti has been appended to that of Kartakhshah. At the present time, all of these former rajas are jagirdars, i.e., land-owners. The rajas of Skardu, Rondu and Tolti have nothing to do with the population of the areas. They are merely owners of the land that they cultivate themselves. The traditional taxes and revenues are not collected any longer by these rajas, with the exception of the Raja of Kartakhshah, who still collects revenue for some of the land that he has let. Astor has been included in the administrative area of Gilgit, and the Raja of Astor is now a landowner in Gilgit and is one of the many powerless rajas of the area.

After Wazir Zorawar Singh had arrested Ahmad Shah, he appointed the latter´s son Mohammad Shah as the new raja. When Mohammad Shah died, his son Ali Shah became the raja. Ali Shah´s death saw the accension of his son Hassan Khan to the throne of Skardu and after him, his son Mohammad Ali Shah Sher Khor became the raja with his uncle (Father´s Brother) as the acting regent. The uncle´s name was Mohammad Shah. During this time, the foster father of Raja Mohammad Ali Shah, Radzer Ghulam Haider created much strife and conflict in the land. Finally, the regent Mohammad Shah died, and Mohammad Ali Shah became the owner of his own piece of land with the title of "Raja".

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF KARTAKHSHAH (KHARMANG)

Early History:

According to common tradition, a man known in Parkuta by the name of Yol Sharong entered this country from Chilas and settled at Sarlang in Parkuta, which is now a separate administrative unit. Later, three brothers called Nan Che, Tamo and Jaliharsa entered from Khapulu and settled in Parkuta proper. Their descendants later on settled in various villages in Parkuta and ruled each separate settlement through their representatives known as Tarama. (Tr. note: the local term for the village administrator and tax collector is Tranpa)

During this period, two men named Chandan and Mapor came from Khapulu; Chandan settled in the Pari village and Mapor in Karabathang. This place is above Kartakhshah about a quarter of a mile from the right bank of the Indus and forms a part of the agricultural land of the rajas of Kartakhshah.

After this, the tribes of Yusuf-pa and Omachak-pa entered from Chitral and the ancestors of Kangas-pa entered from Khapulu, settled in what is now known as Ghandos. During this period, a man of the Dard tribe by the name of Chuanthok entered this country with his companions from an unknown area. He founded a settlement on both banks of the Kandra stream. This settlement is now known as Kharmang. Chuanthok drove Mapor out of Karabathang to a place which became known as Mapor-do after his name, and Chuanthok himself took possession of Karabathang. Here on a cliff, he built himself a compact house and named it after his own name, i.e., Anthok-khar. "Khar" in the Tibetan language means "fort".

At about this time, Chomarsak entered from Rondu and built a house at Gabe beside the stream known as Ghoes. He also founded the settlement at Ghoes. He also named a settlement Palpad after his servant Palnal. For some time, these new settlements continued to be governed separately; however, during the reign of Chomarsak's son Lohrang Mir, Chuanthok drove him out of Ghoes and Palpad. Gradually, he annexed Ghandos, Pari and Mapor-do, thereby forming a kingdom called Kartakhshah. Later on, his descendents took possession of Parkuta and added it to Kartakhshah. These descendents

also started settlements like Tolti beside the Indus, and tradition has it that they ruled the area for a long period.

Later, (the exact period is not known, nor is it clear who ruled over Kartakhshah) hostilities started from Ladakh. It appears that this attack took place about the time when Islam reached Skardu. The alien army overpowered Kartakhshah and Parkuta, annexing the area to Ladakh, and appointed a governor from Ladakh. Under him was the governor of Parkuta. The Ladakhis reigned over Kartakhshah for a long time. The governor of Kartakhshah built a grand palace which he called Boti-khar. This place exists to this day.

During the reign of Ghazi Mir (the Raja of Skardu), the Kharpon (governor) of Kartakhshah tried to attack Skardu. Ghazi sent his eldest son and heir Ali Sher Khan with an army in retaliation, and as a result Ali Sher Khan conquered Parkuta and Kartakhshah, and even attacked Ladakh and conquered it, but later returned it to the Raja of Ladakh. Phguthamat-chho (i.e., the stream of gra-gra) then became the line of demarcation between Kartakhshah and Ladakh. This has already been described in detail in the history of Skardu and Ladakh. It was then that Kartakhshah was merged with Skardu. Ali Sher Khan now took on the task of steadily improving the settlement and building police posts in all the bordering villages. He also built a number of towers, until this small state acquired many fortresses, and so became to be known as Kharmang, which means the "state of many fortresses".

Having conquered Kartakhshah, Ali Sher Khan selected Haider of the Anthok dynasty as its governor. This governor was said to belong to the nation of Barqpomange-pa.

Towards the end of his reign Ali Sher Khan Anchan gave Rondu to his youngest son Ahmad Khan and gave his middle son Abdal Khan the territories of Parkuta and Kartakhshah, although the Governor Haider remained the de facto administrator of Kartakhshah. Abdal khan used the province of Parkuta as his retreat for relaxation. When Haider died, his son Mirza Khan succeeded him as Governor of Kartakhshah.

On the death of Ali Sher Khan, Abdal Khan took possession of Skardu and made Mirza Khan the Governor of both Parkuta and Kartakhshah. Later on, when Abdal Khan was captured, Mirza Khan's administration expanded to Skardu including Adam Khan's possessions. After that, Mirza Khan remained the independent ruler of Skardu and Kartakhshah for the next decade as a result of the continuing strife and unrest in the region. When Adam Khan and Shah Murad returned from Hindustan and took possession of Skardu, Mirza Khan left Skardu and returned to Kartakhshah, where he ruled for

two years. During this period, he had skirmishes with Shah Murad. Finally, Shah Murad joined forces with Imam Quli Khan (the Raja of Shigar) and launched an attack on Kartakhshah. Mirza Khan fought back bravely against the combined forces of Shigar and Skardu for three days. Finally he saw that further struggle would be in vain as the odds were against him and fled with some of his companions through the Kandrak stream to the fort of Chhora-pat. Shah Murad overpowered Kartakhshah and sent his armies via Khapulu in pursuit of Mirza Khan. Secretly, he sent three individuals of three different nations (i.e., Malazomkashi-pa of Kharmang, Barchha of Yarangut, and Naqtolo-pa of Pari) through the Kandrak stream to capture Mirza Khan. One of Mirza Khan's servants Baldord-pa of Mayordo was the brother-in-law (Sister's husband) of Malazomkashi. Baldord-pa turned traitor and helped the three men to capture Mirza Khan when he was asleep one night, and they carried him to Shah Murad by way of the Kandrak stram. Shah Murad imprisoned him and took him to Skardu. From Skardu, he sent him to Adam Khan in Kashmir; Adam Khan in turn sent him to the emperor of Hindustan in Delhi.

SHER SHAH, THE FOUNDER OF THE KARTAKHSHAH KINGDOM (1685):

Shah Murad established his control over Kartakhshah and later taking the advice of Imam Quli Khan (the Raja of Shigar) made his younger brother Sher Shah the governor of Kartakhshah, which arrangement held good during the lifetime of Shah Murad. After his death, Sher Shah came to power, and what he did during his reign has already been described in detail in the history of Skardu. Sher Shah managed to maintain his hold on Kartakhshah with the aid of military reinforcements from the Nawab of Kashmir. The result of this was that although Parkuta and Kartakhshah were separated from Skardu, Skardu held complete sway over Kartakhshah.

Thus Sher Shah founded the Kartakhshah dynasty. During his reign, he employed Kashmiri artisans to build a new palace which he called Somakhar; this palace he built near the earlier one called Botikhar. Botikhar, which is built beside Anthokhar had been renovated and improved by Mirza Khan, and so came to be known as Mirzaikhar. Somakhar built by Sher Shah was just below the Mirzaikhar. Collectively, the edifice is called Anthokkhar, and is still in good condition.

During the time of Sher Shah, a Fakir entered Kashmir bearing a relic of the Holy Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him). This relic was a hair. A holy shrine was contructed around this hair in Somakhar. It is kept in a box inside the shrine, and can be seen even to this day. (Tr. note: this relic enclosed in several caskets one inside the other was seen by a Lok Virsa Team in 1986).

Near Tarkani on the right bank of the Indus, Sher Shah founded a new village, which he gifted to his younger son Hamza Khan. Hamza Khan named the village after himself, giving it the name of Hamzagand. This village is still in the hands of the descendentts of Hamza Khan, although their standing is now no more than that of a common farmer.

During the reign of Sher Shah, the boundaries of Kartakhshah were as follows: towards Skardu, upto greater Charkani and Mattsal Gol; towards Ladakh upto Ghotamat Chothin; above Kirkit, the streams of Shigar Shinghu and Dras were as a rule included in the territory of Skardu.

Aziz Khan and Sa´adat Khan:

After Sher Shah, his son Aziz Khan reigned over Kartakhshah. His reign was fairly uneventful until his son Sa´adat Khan came to power. Towards the end of Sa´adat Khan´s reign, an attack was made on Lon Kharmang from Ladakh by the Lama Co-pa. He killed Sa´adat Khan and his sons in the palace of Somakhar, and took possession of the state.

Two minor sons of Sa´adat Khan, Shah Nawaz and Azam Khan were in the home of their foster-father Ali Dadcoke. Sensing the imminent danger to the two boys, Akli Dadco helped Azam khan to escape to Poreg in the disguise of a beggar. As Shah Nawaz was still an infant, Ali Dadco hid him in his own home. Later on, when Lama Co discovered that Ali Dadco had one of Sa´adat Khan´s sons, he ordered Ali Dadco to give up the child. The loyalty shown by Ali Dadco has paralells only in the history of Hindustan: instead of Sa´adat Khan´s son, he gve up his own son (also named Shah Nawaz) and watched him being beheaded. He brought up the refugee boy Shah Nawaz as his own son. Lama Co ruled over Kartakhshah and Parkuta. The Raja of Skardu could not come to the aid of Kartakhshah against the Ladakhis because he was weakened by internecine struggle. The Raja of Pashkam took advantage of this state of weakness and annexed the areas of Dras upto Gundialocho & the whole of Shigar Shinghu. Later on, Shigar Singhu was annexed to Kartakhshah.

Azam Khan left Bai-Ceh and entered Poreg as a beggar. Some people believe that he went to Ladakh, others say he joined the services of Tusi Namgyal in Lamkba. The latter tradition seems to be the more credible one. It is

said that there he learnt the job of a stable-groom and studied Buddhist scriptures. He learnt the sciences of the Buddhists and became an expert in the science of medicine and physiology. With the passage of time he became one of the trusted servants of Tusi Namgyal. Certain incidents made Tusi Namgyal suspect that Azam Khan belonged to the family of Kartakhshah. When Azam Khan sensed this suspicion, he fled from Loamba in the guise of a physician ("Lardze"). He reached Porbaltik, where he took refuge in the house of a certain Bargan-pa, to whom he related the story of his life. Soon, some men from Lamba came to the house of Bargan-pa looking for the fugitive. Bargan-pa was very hospitable to these people and assured them that Azam Khan had never come that way. When the men left his house, Bargan-pa supplied Azam Khan with necessary help and sent him to Kartakhshah. In Torghund, Ali Dadco took Azam Khan to his own house in Kharbaice as a physician. Now Ali Dadco got Hasan Mohammad Boti-pa to favour Azam Khan. Though Hasan Mohammad was in the employ of Lama Co in Games, he was in favour of the Maqpon family. He entered into an intrigue with Mancongboto, who was a minister of Lama Co, but had earlier held a post as a minister in the Maqpon dynasty and therefore felt that he owed them more loyalty than to the Lama Co. He therefore got ready to aid Azam Khan at all costs.

Now it so happened that Lama Co and both his brothers were stricken with leprosy. Mancongboto suggested Azam Khan be presented in the royal court as physician to treat leprosy patientts and wait for an opportunity to do away with Lama Co and take over the state. Accordingly, "Lama Lardze" (Lardze=physician) entered the court of Lama Co and began to treat all the three brothers. He housed the three brothers each in a separate room on the highest floor of the building overlooking the garden of Argonaldang. The treatment coninued. Meanwhile, the minister Mancongboto brought the Balti tribes into Kartakhshah on some pretext. After a plan was finalised, the three brothers were pushed through the windows into the garden where they met their death. The building where the brothers were housed was itself very high besides being on a cliff which was considerably higher than the ground on which it stood. TThe cliff edge was so close to the windows that anything falling out inevitably fell to the base of the cliff. The brothers naturally met a gruesome death and Azam Khan was proclaimed the next ruler the morning after. The Balti tribes celebrated the occasion wih great rejoicing and the natives of Ladakh were slaughtered mercilessly. In this way, the Azam Khan Ghazi held sway from Kartakhshah to Parkuta. During the reign of Lama Co, the region of Ganokh had been merged with Garkono again, but Ghazi was unsuccessful in getting it back and therefore Mardo was determined as the boundry line between Kartakhshah and Ladakh. Azam Khan Ghazi now brought his brother Shah Nawaz

out of hiding and made him Governor of Parkuta. For loyalty and faihfulness, he awarded Ali Dadco the village of Baiceh and made him the commander-in-chief of the army of Kartakhshah. The descendents of Ali Dadco inhabit Baiceh to this day. They did not pay any taxes until the reign of Raja Ali Sher Khan; Bargan-pa was also richly rewarded for his services. Later, Azam Khan Ghazi's grandson settled Memosthang, and this new settlement was given to the children of Bargan-pa in recognition of services rendered by their ancestors. The descendents of Bargan-pa still inhabit the village of Memosthang.

Ghazi had four sons, Abdur Rahim Khan, Ali Shah, Mukhtar Khan and Abbas Beg. Abdur Rahim was the crown prince, Ali Shah was given the region of Tolti, Mukhtar Khan received Mapordo, Abbas Beg got Doskar (this lies below the stream of Kangche towards Pari). This last place later came to be known as Abbas Beg Sughran and is now under cultivation under the Raja of Kartakhshah.

Abdur Rahim Khan

After Azam Khan Ghazi, his son Abdur Rahim succeeded him as the new Raja; his brother Mukhtar Khan was the cause of many difficulties during his reign. During a flood in the Indus which made the river unnavigable, Mukhtar Khan ravaged and plundered the land as far as Kirkit. In the winter following, he continued to make destructive attacks on Kharmang. Being unable to bear this any longer, Abdul Rahim attacked Mukhtar Khan, captured him and had him executed.

Abdul Rahim had three sons: Ashraf Khan, Mohammad Ali Khan, and Musharaf Khan. Ashraf Khan was strongly inclined towards religion and finally became a hermit, dying as such in Skardu. Mohammad Ali Khan was proclaimed crown prince and succeeded Abdur Rahim Khan as Raja. He methodically improved upon the existing settlements of Olding, Mardal, Shritang, Mardil, Turki, and Memosthang. All these places mentioned are the result of his efforts.

Mohammad Ali Khan had two wives. One of them was the daughter of Raja Ali Sher Khan of Skardu and the other was the daughter of Aziz Khan of Kharmang. By his first wife, he had four sons, namely Ali Sher Khan, Abdur Rahim Khan, Amir al-Din, and Hasan Khan. Ali Sher was the crown Prince. Hassan Khan went on a pilgrimage to Makkah (Haj) and died there without issue. The descendants of Abdur Rahim and Amir al-Din still exist.

Sher Ali Khan succeeded Mohammad Ali Khan as Raja. Sher Ali´s first wife was Shah Jehan Begum, the daughter of Raja Ahmad Shah of Skardu. She bore no child. His second wife was Faza Begum, the daughter of Said Husain of Kharmang. Raja Ahmad Shah of Skardu was desirous of conquering and acquiring more and more territory. He conquered Khapulu and then set his sights of Kharmang. For this, he gave the excuse that Ali Sher Khan had mistreated his daughter Shah Jehan Begum by marrying a second time. As retaliation, Ahmad Shah led an army into Kharmang under the command of his heir Shah Murad. Ali Shah was taken by surprise when he heard that this army had entered Pari and abandoned the fort Anthokkhar, fleeing for Ladakh. It seems that he did not hope to win this battle, or that he thought that in the face of a defeat, he could not expect any other treatment from Ahmad Shah than captivity and execution, since he knew that from his wife, who had already told her husband of her father´s dastardly plans. He had no fear of leaving his family behind since he knew that Shah Murad would not insult his own sister. Shah Murad reached Kartakhshah and rested a few days in the fort. He then fell ill and returned to Skardu. The following story is related of his illness: When he reached the shrine of Samokjhar, he plundered all the wealth of the shrine and distributed it among his soldiers. His sister Shah Jehan Begum tried to stop him, telling him that to rob a holy shrine is an insult to the great men who influence it and that reributtion was sure to follow. Intoxicated by victory, he paid no heed to his sister´s protestes and continued to plunder the shrine.

A quarrel broke out over succession following the dealth of Shah Murad. Details of his have already been described in the history of Skardu. Since Mohammad Shah was the cousin (Mother´s brother´s son) and brother-in-law (Sister´s husband) of Ali Sher Khan, he was partial to Mohammad Shah. Only a few days after Mohammad Shah fled to Kashmir, Zorawar Singh invaded the country with his Dogra army, and seized Pashkam and Sut. This invasion by Zorawar Singh Kalhoria is also mentioned elsewhere in this book. Raja Ali Sher Khan participated along with Zorawar Singh in the campaigns waged in Ladakh, Baltistan and Porang. He also was with Dewan Hari Chand in Wazir Tano´s campaign in Ladakh; he took part in the Baltistan campaign of Wazir Lakhpat Kashwaria. Later he was with Nathe Shah in the first Gilgit campaign, and finally participated in the Srinagar campaign with Wazir Lakhpat and Wazir Ratno. A record of the services he rendered has been compiled by himself in the form of a Persian autobiography. The author was able to have access to his autobiography from Raja Aman Ali Shah, the Jagirdar of Kharmang. The narrative in this manuscript is in great detail, and he describes the personal exploits of Raja Sher Ali Khan, as well as the Dogra invasions of Ladakh and

Baltistan, the Sikh invasions of Gilgit, and the war in Kashmir between Maharaja Gulab Singh and Sheikh Ghulam Mohayuddin. Many of the incidents related in this manuscript have been verified by the author himself through personal investigation in the areas mentioned.

"I am twice-related to Raja Ahmad Shah: I am his nephew (Brother´s son) as well as his son-in-law (Daughter´s husband). However, the Raja took no notice of this double relationship and incited the people of Little Tibet (Skardu, Rondu, Shigar, Kiris, Astor, Khapulu and Parkuta) against me. He then united Ali Khan of Rondu, Haider Khan of Shigar, Ghulam Shah of Parkuta, Khuram Khan of Kiris, Daula Ali Khan of Khapulu and Ahmad Khan of Tolti, causing them to attack Kartakhshah, leaving me no other choice but to flee. I therefore sought refuge in Ladakh, leaving my wealth and my family in the clutches of the enemy. At that time, the Wazir Zorawar Singh Kalhoria entered Daronsor and Kartse with a mighty Dogra army. When I heard of this I was greatly pleased, and I sent my brave brother the Wazir Ghulam Hussain Naqtlo-pa and the brave Fazl Ali Daftari to the Wazir Zorawar Singh on a secret mission. They related to him all the valuable details of the country he had set out to conquer and also told him the story of my distress. They came back laden wih gifts and compliments with the message for me that I could now consider myself as the representative of the Wazir Zorawar Singh, and should present the Raja of Ladakh before him to pay homage. If I was able to do this, I would rise in Zorawar Singh´s esteem. I received this message on the 18th of Ramzan 1253 AH (1835 AD) and presented myself at the court of Wazir Zorawar Singh in the same year on the day of Panjshamba in the month of Zilhaj."

"I had promised the Wazir that I would help in every posible way and that I would give them passage to Baltistan through my land. Hence the Wazir gathered an army of eleven thousand four years after I took possession of my fort in my own land. This army was aided by some ten thousand people from Ladakh and Poreg headed by their Rajas. This army assembled on the boundary of Kharmang towards Baltistan and atttacked the area of Cece Thang. On the other side of the dividing river of Atak, the armies of Raja Ahmad Shah gathered, with recruits mustered from Rondu, Skardu, Parkuta, Tolti and Kharmang. A violent battle started between the two armies."

"The Wazir sent me the following message: "We have come here because of your promise to help us in every possible way and to give us passage. The passage here is very narrow and you will win much favour if you help us in this matter." Thereupon I ordered my army of one thousand men to disengage from the battle and retreat, so that the Wazir´s

army would be able to fight with more space. The Dogra army then attacked.

Many brave men on the side of Raja Ahmad Shah, such as Wazir Sultan, Wazir Parkuta Jan Mohammad and others including a few ordinary soldiers, were slain. the armies of Skardu wavered and finally broke, dispersing and retreating. The Wazir Zorawar Singh then crossed the river into my land, finally entering Hamza Gand. I brought Fazl Ali, Ghulam Hussain Adul-pa and Tarangfa Abdul Ali before the Wazir in order that they receive his patronage. The Wazir was very pleased with me and showered me with gifts and compliments.

"I then took the Wazir to my own fort and played host to the entire army of the Wazir for three days. There I presented the Rajas Ahmad Shah of Tolti and Ghulam Shah of Parkuta to the Wazir and they proferred homage. Three days later, the Dogra army proceeded for Skardu. The family of Raja Ghulam Hussain of Parkuta fled and sought refuge with Ahmad Shah. Five days later, the Wazir reached the fort at Skardu. I personally supervised the plans for the siege of the fort at its main gate. The people of Khapulu, Chor Bat, Kiris and Shigar were the first to accept the new situation and pay homage to the Wazir of the Dogra armies; they also joined us in besieging the fort."

"After seven days of prolonged siege, Ahmad Shah sent the following message: "I will also come and offer homage". The Wazir refused to accept this and replied: "We cannot accept your homage. You have stolen Raja Mohammad Shah from us from the fort at Ladakh. You must present him before you can pay homage to us." Thereupon Raja Mohammad Shah presented his son Mohammad Shah before the Wazir after getting an assurance from me that he would not be harmed. On the day after this, he surrendered himself before the Dogra Wazir and offered his respects with all humility. In this way, all the wealth and riches of Skardu came into the hands of the Wazir: three thousand guns, two thousand swords, much money and countless other goods. The fort was thus captured and Ahmad Shah was led away from Skardu, bound hand and foot in chains, and thrown into prison. The hold of the Dogra now extended to Bagharod, which was the boundry of the state of Skardu.

The people of Rondu and Astor refused to pay homage to the Wazir as they were being encouraged and reinforced by the Gilgitis. When they refused to present themselves, the Wazir sent me with a column of soldiers to Bagharod. From Bagharod, I headed for Rondu by way of Chir. At the same time, two Dogra officers Mirza Rasul Beg and Mohammad Khan also set out for Rondu with a thousand soldiers by way of Kachura. We joined forces and attacked the fort at

Rondu. The Raja of Rondu Ali Khan left his fort and his land and took flight. The fort was captured and the wealth in the fort fell into the hands of the Wazir. We returned happy and victorious to the Wazir. The Wazir sent five hundred soldiers to Astor and captured the fort at Astor as well."

"The Wazir stayed in Skardu together with his army for seven complete months. During this time, I looked after the welfare of my own men, for which purpose I had to spend an amount of five thousand rupees out of my own pocket."

"After nine months, the Wazir appointed Bhagwan Singh Kishtwari, Jamadar Bhopat and Mukhtar Khan Nunsi along with eighty soldiers to look after the Skardu fort and himself left with Raja Ahmad Shah, various courtiers and administrators of Skardu and Shigar for Ladakh via Khapulu. At this, I collected the revenues of the areas of Parkuta and Tolti, gathered the courtiers and administrators of Parkuta and Tolti and left with my army for Ladakh, where I presented myself before the Wazir.

The Wazir was preparing for an attack on Porang by invading the area at Chan Than. The combined forces of the Dogra with the warriors from Ladakh, Poreg and Little Tibet set forth. I myself went with the Wazir upto Chan Than. At this place, the Wazir sent me back to Little Tibet to make arrangements for provisions. After entrusting the command of the army to my real brother Raja Haider Ali and the brave Ghulam Ali, I sent them with the Wazir to aid him. I myself went back to make arrangements for the provisions needed by the Wazir's army. During this time, I had to spend almost three thousand rupees out of my own pocket to supply the army."

"The Wazir reached Porang and conquered the fort there, appointing Mehta Basti Ram as its governor. The Wazir went back to Chan Than, but hardly had he reached there countless Bhotia troops arrived from Lhasa and besieged the Porang fort. The Wazir immediately returned to Porang when he heard of the siuation. A ferocious battle ensued, in which the Wazir was killed. My brother Haider Ali Khan, Raja Ahmad Shah, Mohammad Ali Khan of Khapulu, Ahmad Khan of Tolti, Chogubanu of Ladakh, all of them, became captives of the Bhotia army. All other people of note were killed."

"After that, the Bhotia army attacked Ladakh on the advice of Raja Ahmad Shah and Mohammad Ali Khan of Khapulu. The fort at Ladakh was guarded by the warrior Singh Kamedan with a handful of soldiers. This fort was besieged by the Bhotia so effectively that there was no opportunity for anyone to leave the fort unnoticed."

While this was happening, Raja Ahmad Shah sent his trusted minister, Yostrang Karim to Skardu. Ali Khan of Rondu, Haider Khan of Shigar, Daulat Ali Khan of Khapulu, Kazim Beg of Skardu, Lutf Ali Khan and Khoram Khan all got together and captured Baghwan Singh in the fort of Skardu. They then took control of the fort of the state (Tr. Note: the narrator uses the word "sarkar" when referring to the Dogras; being their employee, it is obvious that he recognises their authority to be supreme.) They looted the official treasury and dispersed the Dogra officials and soldiers in various prisons scattered at various places in the country, such as Wazirpur, Gulabpur, etc.,. The laid the whole land desolate. The property of the state was looted and disloyalty was exhibited in large measure. Raja Haider Khan procured reinforcements and material from the son of Wazir Holo, Wazir Shuja of Nagar. The reinforcements consisted of a hundred and forty men from Nagar. Whatever they found in the official treasury, they divided it between the rajas and the men from Nagar. They did not even spare the fort of Kargil and the guardians of the forts of Kartse, Sorad and Zanskar were unable to enter their own territories. Only the fort of Ladakh remained, and even this was in the danger of being taken.

As this state of affairs existed in Baltistan, it was with great joy that I heard of the preparations of Dewan Hari Chand and Wazir Ranu in Dras. I immediately sent my minister Ghulam Adul-pa to Dewan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratnu, and my trusted minister narrated in detail all that had occured in Baltistan and Ladakh. He then took them along with him to Kargil, where they retook the fort. The Dewan levelled Poreg and reinstated all the former guardians of the forts there. After that, he proceeded to Ladakh with the army, where he scattered the enemy and inflicted heavy losses upon him. In this way, the siege of the fort of Ladakh was lifted, and the country of Ladakh came under the control of the Dogra regime once more. Raja Ahmad Shah, Mohammad Ali of Khapulu and Achogobno escaped along with Jabjhot under cover of darkness. The Dewan entered the Ladakh fort and met the caretaker Magna and warrior Singh Kamedan, congratulating them on their bravery and celebrating with them.

During the time of the siege of the Ladakh fort, Raja Mohammad Ali Khan of Khapulu attacked the area along with Bhotia soldiery numbering one thousand. He killed many soldiers of Dewan Hari Chand and then entered the fort of Camre.

Finally the Dewan scored a decisive victory: many of the enemy were captured and many killed. Raja Mohammad Ali Khan was captured along with one hundred and forty soldiers from Khapulu and three hundred Bhotia soldiers.

Mohammad Ali Khan was mutilated and put into prison as punishment for his misdeeds. In short, all of Ladakh fell into the hands of Dewan Hari Chand and the Wazir Ratnu. At this, my minister Wazir Ghulam Hussain Adulcha came back to me with glad tidings.

At his arrival, I set out with the desire to render more services and came to Karpokhar in Kartse, where I presented myself before Wazir Lakhpat. I took this Wazir with me and entered Skardu through Shigar and Shinghu, passing by Kotalkafcon in the course of my journey. During this journey, I arranged for the supply and provision of one thousand official soldiers. The fort of Skardu had twelve thousand soldiers inside, and we attacked with two thousand (one thousand official soldiers of the Dewan and one thousand of my own.). There was much bloodshed, many people were killed, many fled and some were drowned in the river. A few were captured. The fort was captured by us, but the looting of the fort by the Skardu soldiery earlier left it completely empty of food and provisions. I had to supply the fort with three thousand maunds of wheat.

Raja Ahmad Shah and Raja Ghulam Shah had fled from Skardu with their families and their entire court. They found refuge in Rondu with Raja Ali Khan. Raja Haider Khan of Shigar fled along with his family and court including the wise men of Shigar. Raja Daulat Ali Khan fled to Lhasa through Chorbat. I pursued Daulat Ali Khan and Haider Khan and sent my men after them, who persuaded them to return after many assurances. Wazir Shuja escaped in the night along with his men to Nagar. Bhagwan Singh and the jemadar Bhopat were fetched back from Gulabpur and Wazirpur and put back in the fort of Skardu after being introduced to Wazir Lakhpat. I supplied him with wheat and grain, sheep and goats, mules, gunpowder and bullets; all this cost me a total of five thousand rupees.

When news of this victory reached the court of my Great Mster, he sent a message ordering me to bring all the rajas and people of note and present myself with all of them at his court. In this way, I won prestige from friend and foe alike. I then complied with the order and made preparations for the departure of all the rajas and people of note.

A further order commanded me to choose the most loyal of my people and appoint him at the court as my representative. This representative would act in an advisory capacity. I thereupon sought and received the wilingness of my trusted minister Wazir Ghulam Husain to take on his office, and finally set out from Skardu after collecting all the rajas and other people. I reached Gandarbal, where an elephant complete with a howdah was waiting for me. I reached

the court upon this animal as a result of the respect shown to me by my Great Mastr. I was given the honour of kissing his feet, I won prestige among my own people and was introduced to the important officers of Kashmir.

Dewan Hari Chand inflicted a crushing defeat on the Bhotia army and destroyed them. Many soldiers were captured. Afterwards, the Dewan set all of them free except for three: Kalon of Lhasa, Chap Dzot, and Dzogobono. He took these three along with Raja Ahmad Shah and Raja Mohammad Ali Khan and placed them at the feet of the Great Master. I interceded on the behalf of Mohammad Ali Khan as he was my relative and was able to win his freedom. He was released and handed over to me.

In those days, the ruler of Kashmir was Sheikh Ghulam Mohayuddin, who was an ally of the Sarkar. When Dewan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratnu prepared for the invasion of Chan Than, he sent reinforcements, arms, ammunition, and provisions to help them. He helped similarly with provisions of war in the Skardu campaign. At this time, the Raja of Gilgit Karim Khan ran away from the cruel Gohar Aman of Gilgit and sought refuge with Ghulam Mohayuddin, requesting him to send an army to Gilgit. Ghulam Mohayuddin ordered Nathe Shah to take an army there, and simultaneously requested the Sarkar to review the security of Tibet, so that the friendship and leadership of Nathe Shah would not be wasted. The great Sarkar summoned me and Wazir Lakhpat and said: "Appoint one of your people whom you trust explicitly in order to help Nathe Shah. This person should be acceptable to us. Send this man along with the army of Nathe Shah and do not worry about the cost incurred in this campaign." I proposed the name of my minister Ghulam Hussain, and he was ordered to prepare himself for battle by procuring arms and provisions and by taking the army with him. He was told not to worry about the cost of the equipment, but to conquer Rondu and and join forces with Nathe Shah.

Thereupon Wazir Ghulam Hussain left Skardu with an army of two thousand men, reaching Rondu on the same night. he besieged the fort at Rondu. No battle took place and the campaign was won by wisdom. Ahmad Shah, Ghulam Shah, along with their families and courtiers fled from the fort of Rondu and took refuge in the fort at Astak. Wazir Ghulam Hussain left Rondu and reached Astak and besieged the fort there, capturing it and sending all the fugitives to the administrator Gosaun. Thus the rule of the Sarkar was extended upto the borders of Astak.

After these victories, Wazir Ghulam Hussain proceeded to Gilgit with the combined forces of Tibet and Rondu. On the way, he conquered the white fort of Pokhar by

fighting a battle for it. He then marched forward with an army of three thousand men and joined forces with Nathe Shah near Gilgit. There they prepared to fight Gohar Aman of Gilgit. Gohar Aman was the ruler of the whole of Gilgit and fought hard. There was much blood-letting on both sides in the battle that followed, but Gilgit was conquered eventually and Gohar Aman fled to Ghazaron. Gilgit hence became the Sarkar's possession.

Then came a period of difficulty. There was no food in the fort at Gilgit, as the siege had lasted four months. Nathe Shah had three thousand soldiers with him and the Tibetan army was also three thousand strong. Gohar Aman's army numbered seven thousand. The roads to Kashmir were now closed and to feed so many people in a small place like Gilgit was difficult. Nathe Shah said to my minister: "Famine threatens our soldiers. Something must be done to ease the situation." My minsiter returned victorious to Skardu. In the six months of service, he captured the fort at Ladakh in the month of Sartan (Saggitarius); in the month of Mizan (Libra), he conquered the forts of Skardu, Shigar and Khapulu and in the month of Jadi(Capricorn), he captured the Gilgit Fort. He left no trace of any person who had been disloyal to the Sarkar. On the advice of the official Gosaun, he transported six thousand maunds of provisions to the army at Gilgit. These provisions included arms ammunition, food and tobacco. When news of the conquests reached the notice of the Great Master, he praised me, thus increasing my prestige with all the other rajas of Baltistan.

The Great Master showered me with great honours, and gave me custody of all the rajas of Baltistan who had come with me to Kashmir. I took them all home with me and had them sent safe and sound to their respective homes and families.

When a quarrel broke out over Kashmir in the days of Maharaja Dilip Singh between Sheikh Imamuddin and the Sarkar, the Great Sarkar sent me a personal message asking me to come and present myself with my army and provisions of war in Srinagar. I made arrangements for this which took some time, as various rajas took a long time in getting their forces together. I sent an advance guard consisting of twenty musketeers from Kartakhshah and my minister Wazir Ghulam Hussain Adul-pa with Fazl Ali. After the advance party left, the rajas started coming with their armies, with the exception of Raja Daulat Ali Khan, who returned to his home from the fort of Kharko. I took the rajas with their respective armies and my own army as well to Srinagar. We reached Srinagar fifteen days after we had left from home and presented ourselves before Wazir Lakhpat. I was lodged in the area of Mohalla Sheikh Bagh. Twenty days after my arrival,

Wazir Ratnu arrived in Sheikh Bagh with ten thousand men, and preparations were made for war. It was planned that I would launch an attack together with all the rajas of Tibet from the direction of Kohmaran. There was much bloodshed, and cannonfire continued from midnight to dawn. When morning came, hand-to-hand fighting with swords started. Wazir Lakhpat was killed. The army of Imamuddin was numerous. They besieged us from the direction of Kohmaran and Sheikh Bagh and blocked all exits from the fort. Wazir Ratnu sallied forth with one thousand five hundred men and gave battle to the Sikh soldiers who had blocked the exit at Kohmaran. He broke through their ranks and came to me in the fort. I then closed the gates of the fort. Sheikh Imamuddin received fresh reinforcements every day. Sher Ahmad and the rajas of Bambah & Khakha came with seven thousand men to Changi. In this way, Sheikh Imamuddin had a force totalling thirty thousand fighting men. They besieged us so effectively that even a bird could not pass through their ranks. Cannon-balls and other shot fell about like spring rain. As the siege prolonged itself, the enemy started digging a tunnel towards us. On seeing this, the Wazir Ratnu came to me for advice and asked me what should be done to counter this. I advised him to start another tunnel outwards from the fort. This was agreed upon and I sent my minister Ghulam Hussain along with scores of my men to the cellars to dig this tunnel. Every worker was paid three rupees per day and three rupees for each night, and twenty workers at a time worked round the clock to dig this tunnel. In fourteen days, the tunnel had advanced thirty yards and we engaged the tunnel-diggers of the enemy, forcing them to flee. We remained besieged for three months and unrest began to grow in our camp. I gave the soldiers my assurances and removed their fears. Finally, a representative of Maharaja Dilip Singh came to the site of the siege and gave the command that the siege be lifted. The Sarkar had won a victory, and I had to spend a total sum of seven thousand rupees on this venture from my own resources.

After the siege was lifted, we all presented ourselves before the Great Master, the Sarkar. Wazir Ratnu narrated in great detail the extent of my services. The Sarkar was very generous, and presented me with one pair of bracelets of the noblest metal, a beautiful quilt, a pair of colourful woolen shawls, gold jewelery, etc. He also granted me a jagir (ownership of land) in Kashmir worth five hundred rupees. After this, we all returned to our native country."

Jafar Ali Khan succeeded his father Raja Ali Sher Khan after his death. After Jafar Ali Khan, his son Amanullah Shah took his place. Amanullah Shah's son Ali Sher Khan became the raja after the demise of his father. The land owned by these people (jagir) is the largest in Baltistan as regards the size and income accruing from it. Because of a

certificate issued by Maharaja Gulab Singh, its internal management and administration may not be interfered with. The administration of the present raja has been praised.

The rajas of Tolti are a branch of the larger dynasty of the Kartakhshah rajas. They have no exploit or deed that is of any importance, for which reason only the genealogy of their dynasty has to suffice in this history. After the death of Mohammad Ali, his son, who was still not an adult, succeeded him. He seems to have been a very pious and honest person.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORY OF SHIGAR:

EARLY SETTLEMENTS:

The initial settlements were made by the influx of people from Central Asia. Some of them came by passing through the Kohistan Karakoram via Braldo-la, while most of them used the route Hunza-Nagar-Gilgit and reached here through Bashah. Tradition has it that the early settlers started settlements in Maslas between the streams of Braldo and Bashah. These grew with time into a city named Ghordco. This location is uninhabited today and is desolate; no trace of any settlement can be seen there. However, there is a huge cooking vessel among large river boulders at the location. This vessel is made of "Banian" stone and is three yards in diameter. It is said that this vessel was used for preparing kaci for large gatherings. (Kaci is a kind of food that is prepared by boiling flour with water, and is used instead of bread.). The last of the people who settled in this place were the Mosumikhang. The genealogy of the ruler Gyakhang has been given as far as it could be traceable. It could not be determined whether he was from the same people, and it is not known whether or not he or his nation settled here.

By the time of Testeco, the settlement had progressed in the area of Thomal along the stream of Braldo. The stream of Basha was also settled till Yoghmanands. Settlement was also in progress in Shigar valley and its plain. This plain is located on the left bank of the Braldo where this stream breaks out of narrow mountains and enters the Shigar valley. There is now no trace of there having been any settlement in this large plain. It is said that an attempt was made to resettle this plain during the rule of the Jammu regime and a canal was constructed, but it was not possible to maintain it because the irregular flow of the Braldo. It therefore remained unsettled despite all hopes to the contrary. Recently, Maulana Syed Abbas tried to repair the canal once again. He invested much energy and money in trying to get this land settled again, but he died before this could be completed.

Tosteco constructed a magnificent fort at the hot springs near Thomal and made it his retreat. The tradition about the fort is that it was constructed after an expenditure of one lakh (rupees), for which reason it is known as "Lachikhar" meaning "the fort that cost one lakh". There is still a stone near the hot springs. This is an amber stone and it is thought that it belongs to the resin

left over during the construction of the fort. The plain where these are to be found is uninhabited now, although people still use the hot springs for bathing.

Settlements in the lower part of the Shigar valley also started in the time of Testeco. A man by the name of Apiso laid the foundations of a settlement in Lamsa. It could not be determined by the author what country this Apiso came from. It is conjectured that he came from Skardu or from the direction of Skardu.The settlement of Lamso is located directly under Kotalsatrang and Daghmo at the foot of the mountains on the path. For this reason it is called Lamso, which means "a settlement on a main road". Apiso expanded the settlement in the direction of Shigar Kohistan upto Chambar and Jang, both of which are located on the left bank of the Shigar stream. No settlements had started in the lower part of the Shigar Valley. (Tr. note: the story of Apiso was recorded in 1986 by a Lok Virsa team and now forms a part of the National Folklore Archives).

It is related that at this time Kisar Gyalpo entered this country from Ladakh and went on uptil Rondu. Stories of Kisar Gyalpo are still famous in Ladakh, and are proudly recited with music in gatherings. His exploits are recorded in a valuable book in poetry. Kisar Gyalpo also stayed some time in Skardu, where he married, thereafter leaving for Ladakh. The traditional story is that he was a resident of the area of Hardas in Rondu. Through some means he acquired strengh and held sway over Ladakh and other areas, later extending his power to Lhasa, Turkestan and even Afghanistan. The people of Ladakh use his name with pride even to this day. No details of his conquests could be determined, since this incident should be at the time of the earlier settlements in Ladakh, of which there is no record. (Tr. note: The Kisar saga extends from Mongolia to Hunza and has been recorded in Baltistan).

Apiso's family controlled the lower half of the Shigar valley and Gyakhang the upper half including the streams of Braldo and Bashah. Capakhang had two sons, Sher Batan and Moshed. The eldest of these was Sherbatan and succeeded his father as the next ruler. Moshed was given to the place of Gomaghando to live in. He built a small palace which he called Polpolkhar, and took up residence there.

Ghorocho was the capital of this family and the people of this city were well-off. This made them loose and they were given to pleasures and excesses. A carnival used to take place here, attracting people from different settlements from far and wide. Dances, colourful revels, drinking and roistering took place at this fair. Once a faqir (holy man) came to this festival and asked a question. People payed no

attention to him since they were drunk with alcohol. Finally, an old woman gave piece of bread to the faqir. He broke the loaf in half, kept half for himself and gave the other half back to the old woman, telling her: "Start running away from here, eating the bread at the same time. When the bread is finished, stop and look back." The old woman obeyed and ran to Mangoja, where her bread finished and she looked back. There she saw a mighty avalanche of dirts and rocks sliding down the mountainside onto the settlement of Ghorocho, destroying it completely. The woman stayed at the place she was on, and her children settled the territory of Mangoja, which exists to his day.

The credibility of this story cannot be determined, but it can be seen that the settlement was destroyed by some natural calamity such as a flood or a landslide. These occur fairly often here and it is less likely that a miracle took place. What is more plausible is that an abnormally high amount of rain in the mountains, a glacier blocking the stream, etc., caused this incident. This place is now a desert and many round boulders are lying there, which serve as shelter for wild animals. TThe level of this place not too high above the stream of Bashah, and one could easily settle this place, since irrigation and agriculture would be simple.

Sher Batan´s rule ended and his brother Moshed succeeded him. This individual was an exceptionally cruel man and the people soon became tired of him. In those days, Raja Mughlot of Hunza attacked the Raja of Nagar, capturing Nagar. Raja Catham of Nagar escaped to Ghandos through the stream of Basha. There he roamed around for some days, finally going to Moshed and taking up employment with him as his servant. There he increased his influence until he became one of the trusted advisor and ministers of Moshed. In a few days, he also increased his influence with the people. Since the people were tired of Moshed´s cruelty, they invited Catham to kill Moshed and assured him that they would accept him (Catham) as their new raja. Catham started intriguing with the people and when a plan was ripe, he killed Moshed, taking over the government of the country. His family became famous after his name as the Amacha family. "Tham" means "raja" in the language of Hunza and Nagar, and "Ca" was his own name. This family remained in power till the Dogra conquest, and are wealthy landowners in the area of Shigar.

After Catham was firmly in control of his new state, his well-wishers and ministers from Nagar gathered themselves about him. His own son Yolgotham founded many new settlements in Basha. In this way, he provided land for Kirghiz nomads to settle down in and stabilized his government.

Ten generations have been traced between Catham and Kargoritham, details of which could not be determined, except that they continued to increase their influence slowly until they had absorbed the territory of Apiso and finally ruled over the whole of Shigar.

Goritham's son was Ghazitham. Tradition has it that the Great Hazrat Syed Ali Hamadani came to Skardu and Shigar through Kashmir during the reign of Ghazitham and propagated Islam there. He laid the foundation of the Amborak Mosque. The facts, however, are as follows: the aforementioned holy man entered Kashmir during the reign of the Delhi Sultan Qutubuddin in 781 AH and died after his visit to Kashmir on the 6th of Zilhaj 786 AH. His visit to Baltistan cannot be historically proved . It is probable that one of his representatives visited Baltistan and tradition changed this to the above. It is known that one of his representatives (Khalifa) Hazrat Nur Bakhsh came to Baltistan in 850 AH, dying later in the year 869 AH. Ghazitham was the Raja of Shigar at the time of this visit in Baltistan and he accepted Islam at the hand of Nur Bakhsh, taking the Islamic name of Ghazir Mir, under which name he became famous. By this reasoning, the reign of Ghazi Mir must have been around 780 AH. It is probable that at that time, the ruler of Skardu was Ghotacosinghe and the ruler of Khapulu was Shah Azam.

In this way the reign of Ghazi Mir can be fixed at 1440 - 1470 AD. All dates before this are indeterminate for lack of information about them. If the reign of each ruler is assumed to be thirty years, Catham's reign would fall in 1140 AD. If the ten reigns before Khankhang are calculated in a similar manner, the start of Gyakhang's rule would be 1840 AD. It must be emphasized that this area, like Ladakh is extremely poor in source material, making the task of the historian very difficult.

Ali Mir became the new raja after Ghazi Mir. No noteworthy happening could be found for his reign. In the reign of Gazri, the settlements in Shigar expanded upto Chorka and Nyali. He also owned the forests further below and caused people from Yarkand, Hunza and Nagar to settle there. He constructed a palace for himself on the mountain of Bongri and shifted the capital from Ghundo to this new settlement.

The important event of his reign is the arival of Mir Shamsuddin in Baltistan through Kashmir. At that time, Bokha was the ruler of Skardu, Rai Beharam in Khapulu and Habibco in Poreg. The Mir Sahib started the propagation of the Imamia (Shia) faith. It seems that the son of Gazri called Abdullah Khan accepted the faith.

Another incident occurred during the reign of Gazri with little equal in bravery, beauty, wisdom and cunning: The rajas of Sot, Skardu and Khapulu all attacked Ladakh. The gyalpo of Ladakh chose not to fight such a large army and retired into his fort, which was very secure. A siege started, and dragged on interminably. The confederacy of the rajas became impatient, whereupon Gazri said; "I will capture this fort on the condition that all the booty and spoils will belong to me." All the three rajas accepted his condition.

Gazri removed his men from the fort at night, and in the morning collected all the horses and donkeys and bulls he could find. He loaded them with dirt and came in front of the fort.

The besieged people in the fort thought that a vast amount of provisions had been sent to feed the besieging armies and lost heart. Later on, Gazri got his men to dig up a large area of ground in full view of the fort. The Ladakhis asked what was going on and Gazri replied: "We people are accustomed to eating melons, and the siege is going to last a long time. We do not know how long we will have to wait, and so we are going to plant melons here." On hearing this, the Ladakhis lost heart completely, and gained their release by paying much wealth.

The armies then headed homewards. On the way back, the three rajas began coveting the wealth. Gazri apprehended this, and said to the Raja of Khapulu; "How can I carry such a large amount of wealth all the way to Shigar. I have a daughter, why don't you marry your son to her. I will make an inventory of the whole wealth and give it all to you as dowry for my daughter." The raja fell into the trap and agreed to this and the rajas of Skardu and Sot were unable to do anything to get this wealth.

When both sides had prepared for the marriage, the wily Gazri sent this message to the Raja of Khapulu: "Please send a party of people from your side so I can send off the bride as is the custom." The marriage party left Khapulu for Shigar with much pomp and show. When the marriage party reached Shigar, Gazri received them most politely and with all the formalities. He then imprisoned them all on the following night and said: "Your freedom is not possible until I have got all my wealth back as is recorded in the inventory." The Raja of Khapulu came to know of this and regretted his folly, but was totally helpless. He sent all loot back to Gazri and thus won the freedom of his people.

The names of the rajas of Khapulu and Skardu are not known. It is possible that they were respectively the Maqpon Bokha and Rai Bahram.

Gazri was succeeded by his son Abdullah Khan.

Popular tradition has it that the invasion of Baltistan by Sultan Said Khan, Wali of Kashghar took place during the reign of Abdullah Khan. Although there is mention in the Tarikh-i-Rashidi of the Sultan's invasion of Shigar, the name of the Raja of Shigar is not mentioned. It is known, however, that the Raja of Khapulu at that time was Behram. The narrative of the invasion according to the Tarikh-i-Rashidi is as follows:

Invasion of Sultan Said Khan, Ruler of Yarqand: (in 939 AH, i.e., 1532 AD)

"Sultana Said Khan, Ruler of Yarqand took a thousand soldiers in 939 AH (1532 AD) and moved from Maryol (Ladakh), turning his attention to Balti. He reached Balti in the summer season. Behramco immediatley accepted the suzerainty of the ruler, and presented himself in the service of the Sultan. All the others began to intrigue and revolt. With the guidance of Behramco, the Sultan was able to take the fort of Ashgar, which is the capital of the whole land of Balti. All the men were killed, while the women and property fell into the hands of the victors. Apart from that, even the mountainous territory was not spared. However, all forts that were too strongly fortified were spared. in spring, the sultan left Balti and went back to Ladakh."
(Tr. Note: cf. here the English translation of the Tarikh p.422, Ch.XCV., London 1895)

Abdullah Khan's son Haider Khan further increased the settlements around the stream of Braldo and settled the nomads from Yarqand in the last areas of Testun and Askole. In this way he built good diplomatic relations with the kingdom of Yarqand, and had the boundary between Shigar and Yarkand fixed. The Karakoram range was mutually agreed to be the boundry.

The ambassador of Yarqand came to Shigar with a hundred soldiers, and a representative of Shigar also went to Yarqand. Thereafter, caravans of traders from Yarqand came regularly to Baltistan, and the people of Shigar could also come and go to and from Yarqand.

At this time, fruit-bearing trees such as Apricots, peaches, grapes, apples, walnuts etc., were planted in Shigar after being imported from Yarqand, Hunza and Nagar. Cuttings of these trees were brought from other lands and planted in Shigar and these trees were spread to all parts of the land. Apricots did very well in the climate of Shigar,

and were even sweeter, finer, and juicier in this country than in the land of their origin. At this time in Baltistan there are scores of varieties of apricots: some of them taste as sweet and as fine as the dates of Iraq after they are dried.

Above the last settlements on the streams of Braldo and Bashah were constructed two forts, one above each stream. These were there for the security of the settlements and used to have guards in them. The ruins of these forts can still be seen to this day.

Diplomatic relations with Yarqand remained till the reign of Mohammad Khan and much development took because of the influence from Yarqand. Politeness and good manners spread throughout the land as a result, giving Baltistan superiority over the other neighbouring countries.

During the reign of the heirs of Abdullah Khan, i.e., Haider Khan and Mohammad Khan, two brothers by the names of Shah Naser Tusi and Syed Ali Tusi enterd Shigar by way of Thale. They preached Islam in Shigar and built mosques that had rooms for lodging. Mosques of this type are known in Baltistan and Kashmir as Khanaqah.

No noteworthy incident occurred during the reign of Hamid Khan, Rozi Khan and Sultan, nor is there any information about the time between the reign of Haider Khan and Sultan Khan. It is possible that these names are arbitrary or imaginary. After these, Mohammad Khan was the raja. No noteworthy event occured during his reign. The Raja of Skardu Abdal Khan attacked Shigar after the former's death. It is said that Mohammad Khan had twelve sons, all of whom were imprisoned by Abdal Khan and sent separately to the countryside to be executed. Eleven of them were murdered, each in a different village; the eldest of them Hasan Khan was sent to the village of Gomaghando for execution, but the people of the village took pity on him and helped him flee the country to Kashmir, providing him with money and guides. He wandered from Kashmir to Delhi and stayed a time there. It so happened that the emperor of Delhi set out to hunt tigers, and Hasan Khan joined the camp followers. The Emperor was attacked by a tiger and Hasan Khan happened to be in the vicinity at the moment; he unsheathed his sword and cut the tiger in two. The Emperor's attention was thus drawn favourably to Hasan Khan, and Hasan Khan took the opportunity of relating of the cruelties of Abdal Khan. Adam Khan, who was also present, pleaded the case of Hasan Khan too and begged for redress. Thereupon the Emperor issued a command to the Nawab of Kashmir that the kingdom of Shigar be restored to the rightful heir. As a result of this command, Hasan Khan entered Skardu along with the army of Kashmir,

arrested Abdal Khan and took him along to Shigar. He thus became the ruler of Shigar. These incidents have been dealt with in detail in the history of Skardu, and the above summary will suffice here.

Abdal Khan spent the rest of his life in the prisons of Shigar and died there as well. His mausoleum still exists in the royal graveyards of Shigar. It is generally said about Abdal Khan that he was an exceedingly cruel person, and people had given him the title of "Mizos", meaning "Man-eater".

Hasan Khan called over washermen, cobblers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, stone-hewers and many other artisans from Hindustan and encouraged them to settle in Shigar. This accelerated development in the country, influences of which are present even today, and is a matter of pride for the whole of Baltistan. Hasan Khan gave up the old fort of Bongrikhar (also known as Dongkhar) and built a new palace on the right bank of the Shigar stream, which he called Phungkhar. He declared this palace to be his capital. This palace still is the residence of the rajas of Shigar and the building is in good condition.

Instead of an ambassador from Yarqand, an official from the province of Kashmir was appointed in Shigar in the days of Hasan Khan´s reign. The people began to call him "Thanadar" ("District Governor"). In this way, the Empire of Delhi was extended upto Shigar.

Imam Quli Khan (1635 - 1705)

Hasan Khan was not able to rule too long and died soon after coming to power. His son was called Hussam Quli Kha, but no record exists in history of this person. It is possible that he died during his father´s liftime. Anyway, Hussam Quli Khan´s son Imam Quli Khan became the next raja. During his long reign, many upheavals and revolutions took place in Baltistan, all of which are mentioned in the Shigharnamah. Since his exploits have more to do with Skardu, the relevant sections have been included in the history of Skardu. When one reads these, it will become obvious that Imam Quli Khan was doubtlessly one of the greatest rulers of Baltistan: he spread his influence to Gilgit on one side and to Ladakh on the other. In short, he is a source of great pride to tthe people of Shigar.

Azam Khan (1705 - 1784)

Of the two sons of Imam Quli Khan, Azam Khan was the older one and was born from the womb of the Rani of Kiris. He was also the nephew (Brother's son) of Amir Khan Raja of Kiris and the son-in-law of Mohammad Rafi Khan, the Raja of Skardu. The other son of Imam Quli Khan was from the Rani who belonged to the Ghasoa-pa family of Imam Quli Khan's ministers. Azam Khan took the place of his father on the throne of Shigar. Since the influence of the Ghasoa-pa people was very strong, he lived in constant insecurity fearing that his half-brother Ali Khan would one day seize power. In order to remove the thorn in his side, he sent Ali Khan together with the minister Ghasoa-pa Mohammad to Yarqand on a diplomatic mission. This minister was the uncle (Mother's brother) of Ali Khan. In place of this minister, he appointed Drogh-pa as his new minister.

After he had thus removed the dangers that threatened him, Azam Khan turned his attention to the affairs of state. At that time, the Afghans had invaded Skardu in the course of their attack on Kashmir.This situation caused the kingdom of Skardu to weaken greatly. Taking advantage of this, he invited the Raja of Skardu Sultan Murad over to Shigar on the pretext of mutual consultation. He then planned to drown the Raja of Skardu in the middle of the Shigar river when he crossed. The plan was implemented, and the Raja of Skardu was drowned accordingly. Azam Khan then appointed Mone-pa Ali as the new Kharpon (raja) of Skardu.

There was another incident during the time that is worthy of note, and the incident was narrated to me by my friend Syed Abbas Chorka. It is reproduced here in a summary:

The story of Syed Mukhtar and Syed Yahya:

During the reign of Azam Khan, two brothers by the names of Syed Mukhar and Syed Yahya entered the land of Shigar. The raja met them with respect and made arrangements for their board and lodging, upon which the brothers settled in Shigar. The raja used to visit them every day and hold long discussions with them on aspects of religin, as Syed Mukhtar had an exceedingly sweet voice and was a learned scholar as well. Because of this man's magnetism and the interest of the raja, all the people of Shigar used to collect around the two brothers. In a few days, so many people used to gather at the place where the two brothers were that the court of the raja became practically empty. Envy grew in the heart of the raja when he saw this, and he planned to kill the brothers. He consulted his ministers, and one of them said; "It is not unmanly to assasinate

someone." Another said: "All of the people of Shigar have become their followers. As long as these two are alive, the followers will remain. Nor can they be dissuaded from what they are doing. The best thing to do is to send an old woman, who will poison them."

One of the raja's guards heard of these plans. Since he was one of the followers of the Syed brothers, he hastened to them and told them of the plot against their lives. On hearing this, the Syeds left the place at midnight and travelled to Chorka, where they settled in the area of Mamojo. They then informed their followers of their whereabouts. In a few days, the whole population of Shigar from Chorka to Braldo and from Nyali to Basha became the followers of the two brothers. The followers built a residence for them near the bank of the stream in the area of Mamojo. This building was so secure that even a bird could not enter it.

In this way, the Syed brothers escaped from the raja and the raja consequently lost his power. He was unable to collect revenues or tribute from some of his areas. The ministers obtained reinforcements from the people of Nar and launched attacks on the people on the upper slopes, but they were driven back each time. Finally, the raja sent the following letter through the same old woman mentioned earlier to Syed Yahya: "If you deliver Syed Mukhtar to us, we will give you a house to live in and construct a large mosque (Jamia masjid) in your honour. We will proclaim you the religious leader and reformer of our land (Mujtahid) and all of us will become your followers."

When Syed Yahyah read the contents of the letter, he thought to himself: "Brothers will have to part some day. As long as I am with Syed Mukhtar I am like his servant and slave. No one even mentions my name. It would be the best thing for me to do if I hand him over to the raja and live under the raja's patronage, since I will not be able to find a place like Shigar where I can live in peace with my family." After making this decision, he wrote on the back of the letter that he had received from the raja: "Your Highness! Tomorow night is Friday eve. On this night, Syed Mukhtar enters his place of worship and is so busy with meditation and prayers that he has no idea of what is going on around him and no concern for his own life. Come in the evening and wait by the fort. When Syed Mukhtar is busy in meditation and prayers, I will throw fire over the wall of the fort, after which I will open the gates of the fort. You can then enter the fort and catch him. I will come the next day to offer my respects to the raja".

The raja was greatly pleased with the reply and acted upon the advised plan. Syed Yahya threw the promised fire over the wall of the fort, opened the doors at the right time and then went and lay down in his bed. The wife of Syed Mukhtar, Berogyalmo, heard the noise of the raja's men entering the fort and ran in fright to her husband, saying: "The raja's men are coming to get you. What are you doing sitting here? Get up and run!" Thereupon the Syed got and ran and reached Kiris by the morning. The raja's men spent the whole night plundering and looting the fort. Finally, they caught the wife and two sons of Syed Mukhtar and took them along, sending news of their victory to the Raja of Shigar. At dawn, they were in the desert of Thongmodrang, where they bound the limbs of the two sons, stood them up in the sand and martyred them with a hail of arrows. Remains of their graves still exist there and the place is now famous as Masumokeastana. The two boys were called Abdullah and Syed Baqar.

The raja's men took the loot and Berogyalmo to the raja. He distributed the loot among them. In the course of the day, Syed Yahya also came with a pious face, praying with the rosary beads that he held in his hand. He offerd his respect to the raja. The raja welcomed him and said: "You have kept your promise. Now it is incumbent upon us to keep our promise. You are free to choose any place that pleased you, and we will cause a house to be built for you there. Similarly choose a site for the location of the great mosque." The Syed chose a spot near a bridge at the bank of the stream. Peparations were made to construct the mosque by gathering all the people of Shigar for the work. The wood from the fort of Syed Mukhtar, (known as the fort of Berogyalmo) was removed and used for the construction of this mosque. It is said that the mosque was built within one year. The raja fixed a minimum tribute payable to Syed Tahya from each household of the land. This tribute was enjoyed by the future generations of Syed Yahya's family as long as this arrangement held. It stopped later. At this time, his descendents have been reduced to poverty, and beg from street to street.

Berogyalmo was in a state of anguish at the separation from her husband and her two sons. When evening fell, she performed her ablutions and started her prayers. As she knelt down in prayer, her soul left her body, and she was buried in the royal graveyard. Remains of her grave can still be seen there.

Syed Mukhtar in the meantime was warmly welcomed by the raja, the ministers and the people of Kiris. All the people from Kiris to Chorbat collected together, and in a few days built a residence for him, as well as a large mosque.

Each one of them agreed to give the Syed eight measures of grain as tribute and became the guardians of his security.

The Raja of Khapulu wrote to Syed Mukhtar saying; "If you will allow me, I will take revenge on the people of Shigar, and make arrangements for your stay in Khapulu." The Syed replied: "Both the one who kills and the one who is killed in a battle between Muslims are destined for hell. I cannot allow such a thing. As far as Khapulu is concerned, I must tell you that these people have been very kind to me in Kiris and have further become the guardians of my safety. To leave them would be disloyal. However, if any misfortune should occur, the only place I can run to is in your direction."

The great Syed Mukhtar built large and small mosques in every village between Kiris and Chorbat and took many students for the dissemination of Islamic education. His descendants are still committed to this task.

Later, the people of Shigar sent a plea to Syed Mukhtar saying; "We cannot be satisfied with Syed Qutubuddin. Please send one member of your family as your representative to us." Thereupon the Syed sent his nephew Syed Najmuddin to serve the people of Shigar. He was given a house in the area of Betrepa and a large mosque was constructed as well. He used to hold audience there and there were many people in his gatherings.

Then the people of Chorka sent a similar request to him for the provision of a representative for their people, and this representative took up residence in the area of Khamnika, where the people built a house and a large mosque for him. He then started this holy work there. Abul Hasan was a learned scholar. His writings exist to this day."

Mohammad Zafar Khan Sagharsan was the son of Sultan Murad at the time of the latter's murder. He fled to Poreg, and remained there for the next five years in refuge. Raja Azam Khan's attention was not focussed on this refugee, giving Zafar Khan an opportunity to plot and intrigue, although he was very young and had no means of power with him. However, after five years, he managed to develop the means. Meanwhile, Ali Khan and Wazir Mohammad, who had been sent to Yarqand by Azam Khan, finished their task there and entered Poreg via Ladakh. Coincidentally, they met Zafar Khan, who told them the whole story of tthe misfortune that befell his father at the hands of Azam Khan. These two were aleady suffering because of Azam Khan, so they immediately became prepared to oppose Azam Khan and to help this unfortunate boy. However, they had no money or goods with them as they had been travelling for a long time, and nor did

the boy. They finally sent the Wazir Mohammad to the boy's foster father Sosopa in Skardu in order to get some resources from him. Sosopa proved to be disloyal and had Wazir Mohammad arrested, thereafter handing him over to the Kharpon of Azam Khan in Skardu, Ali. The Kharpon immediately sent a message to Azam Khan in Shigar, informing him of what had happened. Azam Khan rached Skardu, put the unfortunate Wazir Mohammad in the Sikah clearing, and made him the target of countless arrows until he died. He then had Zafar Khan and Ali Khan arrested from Poreg and brought before him. He had Zafar Khan imprisoned in the fort of Monkhar in Shigar and had his brother Ali Khan banished from the country into Kongar. In this manner, Azam Khan cleared his way of all problems, but his cruelty brought with the seeds of his own destruction.

Suleman Khan (1784 - 1787)

The wife of Azam Khan Fakhrunnisa, who was the sister of Sultan Murad (as has already been mentioned in the history of Skardu) was very disturbed at the doings of her husband and saddened at the destruction of her father's family. She therefore took the area of Kwardo as her bride-wealth (haq-mehar) and separated herself from her husband. She then made plans for the destruction of her husband as a revenge for the misdeeds that he had committed. She therefore won one Musammi Wali to her side. Musammi Wali was the cousin (Mother's brother's son) of Wazir Mohammad and the foster father of Fakhrunnisa's son Suleman. Using his resources, she caused a rebellion in Shigar against Azam Khan. Azam Khan was killed in the melee that followed and the infant son Suleman was proclaimed the new raja of Shigar. Since Suleman was of a tender age and stayed with his mother in Skardu, Musammi Wali was declared the regent of Shigar until Suleman was ready to take over. When Suleman came to power, he had Mohammad Zafar Khan released from prison and put upon the throne of Skardu.

Ali Khan (1887 - 1789)

When Suleman Khan achieved adulthood, his faithful foster father came from Shigar to restore the throne to him. In the course of conversation, Suleman asked him who had killed his father, to which the foster-father replied: "The people of Shigar killed him in a rebellion." The boy said: "I will chop up the people who incited this rebellion like cucumbers." Since he himself was the cause of the rebellion, Musammi Wali feared for his life, and thought of ways to save himself. On the way to Shigar, he killed Suleman at a place called Mastrang Dongmon and buried his body there. He reached Shigar and recalled Azam Khan's half brother Ali Khan, who was at that time living in exile in Nagar. Ali Khan was proclaimed the Raja of Shigar. Ali Khan appointed Azam Khan in Skardu as his own minister and gave him his father's place after removing Drogh-pa from this post. To this day, a house of Drogh-pa exists in the quarter of the Ghasoa-pa people. The result of Azam Khan's betrayal and treason was that no descendants of his existed thereafter.

Hussain Khan (1789 - 1790)

Ali Khan had married in exile in Nagar. He had a son by the name of Hussain Khan from this marriage . Hussain Khan succeeded his father after his death. No noteworthy incident of his reign is known.

Azam Khan (1st time 1790; 2nd time 1799; 3rd time 1813-1818)

Quli Khan (1st time 1790; 2nd time 1800-1818; 3rd time 1818-1819)

Hussain Khan had three sons. The eldest one was Azam Khan from the womb of his wife from Khapulu. The other two, Quli Khan and Daulat Khan were from the womb of his other wife, who was the sister of Ali Sher Khan II, Raja of Skardu. Azam Khan succeeded Hussain Khan after the latter's death, but Quli Khan contested the claim and threatened to bring forces from Skardu. Ali Sher Khan II of Skardu invaded Shigar and attacked Azam Khan on the request of Quli Khan. Azam Khan lost the battle and fled to Khapulu, while Quli Khan took the throne of Shigar for himself.

Mohammad Ali Khan was the Raja of Khapulu at that time, and became very angry at what had happened. However, his resources at that time were very limited and he could take no practical action. Azam Khan waited nine years in Khapulu in the hope of raising an army. Finally, Mohammad Ali

Khan attacked Shigar and faced Quli Khan in battle. he unfortunately lost the battle and had to flee towards Skardu; Quli Khan remained the ruler of Shigar.

By that time, Skardu was ruled by Raja Ahmad Shah. After a few years, he saw an opportunity and attacked Quli Khan and Azam Khan with all the resources at his disposal. Azam Khan resisted, but could not hold out against Ahmad Shah's counterattack and lost the battle, fleeing finally to Khapulu. Quli Khan became the ruler of Shigar for the second time.

Azam Khan married a girl of the Phacho people in Khapulu. She bore him two sons, Haider Khan and Hatim Khan, and two daghters, Daulat Khatun and Halima Khatun. In this way, he passed twelve years in exile. After that, he got some help from Khapulu and attacked Shigar one more time. Quli Khan was defeated; he fled to Skardu and sought refuge there. Azam Khan thus became the ruler of Shigar for the third time, but died only a few years after this.

Azam Khan's son was still a minor at he time of his father's death. Quli Khan, seeing his chance again, attacked Shigar together with the Raja of Skardu, capturing the country for the third time, but death gave him no time to enjoy the fruits of his conquest.

Haider Khan under control of Skardu (1819 - 1842)

The death of Quli Khan caused events to take yet another turn: Ahmad Shah's eye fell on the daughter of Azam Khan, Daulat Khatun, whose beauty and charm had no equal, and so he married her. After consultation with her, he made the minor boy Haider Khan the token ruler of Shigar, taking the reins of state in his own hands. This situation endured till Haider Khan became an adult. After that, he was made the effective ruler of Shigar and Ahmad Shah contented himself with ruling only in Skardu. Under these circumstances, the heirs of Quli Khan were robbed of their inheritance.

The reign of Ahmad Shah in Skardu and the reign of Haider Khan in Shigar brought no incident worthy of note. Haider Khan was the ruler during the invasion of Wazir Zorawar Singh Kalhoria, and the Wazir accepted Haider Khan as the Raja of Shigar. At the death of the Wazir in Porang, however, Haider Khan came out in open rebellion and took possession of Skardu. During the last campaign of Wazir Lakhpat, Haider Khan was captured and sent along with his family to Jammu, where he died. Haider Khan's son Murad Khan left Jammu after his father's death and returned to Shigar. His descendants are in Shigar to this day.

Imam Quli Khan under Jammu (1842):

Suleman Khan, son of Quli Khan, Raja of Shigar had died at the time of Wazir Lakhpat's campaign in that area. However, his descendants did exist, and their luck took a turn for the better when Wazir Lakhpat acknowledged Imam Quli Khan, son of Suleman Khan as the Raja of Shigar. He gave Imam Quli Khan a gift of land (jagir) as well as the confiscated property of his ancestors. For the administration of Shigar, he appointed an official (thanadar) and some soldiers for the official's protection. He constructed a fort on the right side of the Shigar stream to house them.

Imam Quli Khan died issueless. His brother Abbas Khan was insane, so the jagir remained for some time in the hands of the Jammu Government. Then the minor son of Abbas Khan went to Jammu for redress. He was given half of the land, and it is said that the other half was promised to him after he became an adult. This promise was never fulfilled, and the son of Abbas Khan, Ali Mardan Khan was left with only half of the property.

Ali Mardan Khan died in 1331 AH, leaving behind an infant daughter. At the moment, Ali Mardan's younger brother Azam Khan is the Raja of Shigar.

CHAPTER IV

THE HOUSE OF YABGO OF KHAPULU AND KIRIS

Part One

Early Settlements and the First Khapulu Rajas

It is generally believed that the area of Baltistan now know as Khapulu was first populated by those people from Central Asia who came either via Saltor from Yarqand, or via Hunza from Sakan (Sikkim) and Gilgit, or via Nobrah from Lhasa and Ladakh. Originally they wandered about this country as nomads, grazing goats and sheep. Later, they gradually settled down and began cultivating land. It is thought that some people also came from Kashmir and settle here. At first they lived a tribal life. Later, one of these tribes gained power; and one of its kings (Raja) is said to bear the name of Mohu-tang-bashi-sho. During the reign of his son, the country was destroyed by a mighty flood in which almost the entire population drowned, the survivors dispersing. Perhaps this was the time when the Indus had been blocked up near Kachura by the falling of a mountain, and so had turned into a mighty river flowing from Kachura to Khalsi. As a result, the waters of the river Shyoq must also have been blocked up and it too might have been transformed into a mighty river from Nobrah upwards, so that the all the inhabitants of the early settlements on its banks may also have drowned.

Ultimately the block gradually broke apart, permitting the waters of the Indus to flow out and land emerged again. People started coming from the surrounding areas and settling there again.

It is said that those who came from the direction of Hunza settled in the area of Thale. For security, they built three forts: 1) Cang Khar, which Chir Khan built on top of the eastern hill of Mohalla Yar Khor in the Thale district; 2) Choghu Khar, built by Ma Cheer Khan atop the northern hill of Mohallah Tharonges in the Thale District and 3) Marchung Khar, built by Shah Sultan, on the South-eastern bank of Marcung Lungma in the Thale district.

Those who came to this country from the direction of Yarqand settled at the streams of Thagas, Saltoro and Hoshe. They built four strongholds: 1) Satrang Pokhar, in

Haldi, 2) Salang Khar, in Salang (this is also known as Mindoq Khar and the settlements of Thagas and Che Thang are located near it); 3) Kharko Khar, in Kharko district, 4) Bar Ghar Sikin Khar, in Barghar district.

Those coming from Ladakh built the last frontier fort Gyalmokhar in Sermun; they also built a few solid houses in Chorbat.

During this period, one Gori Tham came to power and constructed his palace on a cliff overlooking the Farda stream. He began to live there and rule. During this period, Rlta-khambo became settled and later acquired the name Farda.

In the same manner, another man named Hind Malik also seized power and began to rule.

Later on, a person called Beg Manthal arrived in the district of Halde via the Kundus stream. He was a very powerful, warlike and astute man. Through his physical prowess and mental ability, he subjugated Halde and Che Thang. His tyranny and evil temper earned him the name of Shin Pho Cho. His pragmatism permitted him to gradually gain control over Gori Tham and Hind Malik, but he left their administration intact, did not interfere in their internal affairs and remained content with merely being their superior.

During Gori Tham's time, a domini (dancing girl) of the Dard tribe came from Doro with her son to Rltakhambo. Her singing and beauty were incomparable and won the heart of Gori Tham, who took her into his house. She bore him a boy named Albalde who died before reaching maturity. Gori Tham named her son who had come with her from Doro as his heir, incensing both Beg Manthal and Hind Malik, who jointly attacked him. They captured him, dragged him out of his palace and ruthlessly murdered him. Beg Manthal annexed Farda into his territory.

An annual festival called tarbala is held to commemorate the murder of Gori Tham in Farda to this day.

During that time, a person named Palde arrived here from Chilas. He requested Beg Manthal to give him some land to settle in. The Raja bestowed on him the whole area of Saltoro. The man settled the area named after him, Mohalla Palde in Mandak and his descendants settled in the entire area of Saltoro.

There is no way of determining when these events took place. Historically, Azam Shah's reign is verified at circa 1420 AD. Using a rough reckoning of thirty years for

each ruler, Beg Manthal's time would be around 850 AD.

Two or three years after the murder of Gori Tham, another great flood broke loose when a lake burst its banks, causing Rltakhambo to be submerged entirely. Beg Manthal settled a new area which today is called Farda.

Hind Malik died issueless, Shin Phocho (Beg Manthal) annexed his territory and became the sole ruler of the entire area. Halde was his Spring capital, Mohalla Salang of Ce Thang his winter residence.

On the death of Beg Manthal, his son Tikan Beg became the Raja. In this way, this dynasty ruled over this country through nineteen generations. It is not possible to trace the detailed genealogies of these rulers and the names recorded do not appear to be authentic, no means being available to check them.

SECTION TWO

THE MUSLIM RAJAS OF KHAPULU

Shah Azam, Raja of Halde and Salang (1420 - 1450 A.D.)

Twenty generations after Beg Manthal, Shah Azam is thought to be the first Muslim Raja of Khapulu. Three Dard herdsmen with their livestock came from Chilas during his reign. On their request, the raja gifted the following three areas to them as grazing pasture:

1. Barqpa Kir, below Doghni from the Shyoq to the Indus
2. Barqpa Thor at Hanjuri
3. Barqpa Chor, from Poin to Nobra

These territories thus became settled.

During the last years of his life, holy man Syed Mohammad Nur Bakhsh arrived in Skardu from Kashmir. According to another tradition Amir Kabir Syed Ali Hamadani had earlier come to Skardu, Shigar and Khapulu and had personally laid the foundations of Islam in this country, but this has not been verified. In any event, as has been mentioned earlier, it was either Amir Kabir himself or his Khalifah Syed Mohammad Nur Bakhsh who were responsible for the spread of Islam in the whole of Baltistan. The latter made disciples in the name of Amir Kabir Syed Ali Hamadani. He stayed only a short while in Khapulu, where he propagated the faith of Islam. The Raja accepted Islam and the temple at Chaqchan lost its glory. The foundations of the Jamia Masjid at Chaqchan were laid. The holy man thereafter left for Yarqand through the Saltoro valley. His influence caused the people to be called Nur Bakhshi and this sect is prevalent there to this day.

Syed Mohammad Nur Bakhsh died in the year 869 AH.

After Shah Azam, four or five rajas are mentioned in the genealogy, but no facts about their reign are given. It is possible these names are fictitious. The name of Raja Salim Alde appears sixth in the line of descent.

Yabgo Salim Alde, Raja of Thorsekhar (1450 - 1460 AD.)

During the reign of Salim Alde, a great flood in the Hushe and Shyoq rivers occurred, inundating Cethang and rendering people homeless. Some went away to Chorbat and settled in Dau; some migrated to Ladakh and settled in Chachut, some took refuge in Parkuta and Doghni. This destruction caused Salim Alde to think in terms of creating new settlements, so he began to establish a settlement around what is now known as Khapulu and was formerly a wilderness. The area of Cethang that survived the flood he divided into two parts, calling them Salang and Ghorse respectively. He reclaimed the flooded area with much effort and repopulated it.

Under these circumstances, the Raja was also obliged to change his capital. The house of Barqpa Thor on the top of a ridge adjoining Khapulu pleased him greatly; he acquired it from its owner, made it his spring headquarters and, in the name of its original builder, called it Thorsekhar. He gradually developed this settlement and also extended his domain from Chorbat to Kiris.

Yabgo Azrona (1475 - 1485 A.D.)

Two rajas follow Yabgo Salim, but as no facts about their reign are available, their names may well be fictitious.

These are followed by one Azro Azrona, who was said to be a brave man. He conquered neighbouring territories and also attacked Poreg. At this same time, the Raja of Zanskar had also attacked Poreg, and Yabgo Azrona came into conflict with him. The people of Zanskar were defeated and their raja was killed. Yabgo Azrona brought the dead raja's queen with him to Khapulu. He rebuilt the fort of Kharko and constructed a Jamia Masjid there.

Yabgo Bekam (1485 - 1494 A.D.)

Yabgo Korkor and Yabgo Behram (1494 - 1550 A.D.)

zrona's son was Yabgo Bekam, but nothing is known about him except that he died leaving his two sons Yabgo Korkor and Yabgo Behram very young. It appears that these two ruled jointly. In the history of foreign countries, only Behram is referred to, though at that time Korkor should also

have been present. During the reign of Behram, two events of great importance occurred which throw much light on the history of this country.

As has already been mentioned in connection with Skardu, Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi had been sent away in 902 AH from Kashmir to Skardu in the reign of Sultan Muhammad Shah by the latter's minister, Syed Mohammad Behaqi. He stayed about five or six years in Baltistan and worked to propagate the Imamia faith. Having accomplished this in Skardu and Shigar, he arrived in Khapulu. The date of his arrival in Khapulu is not recorded, although it is mentioned that Rai Behram was there at that time. Since the Mir Sahib returned to Kashmir from Khapulu in 908 AH, it can be surmised that he must have come to Khapulu between 906 and 907 AH. Anyway, upto the time of his return to Kashmir, he continued to preach the faith.

After that, Sultan Saeed Khan, the king (Shah) of Yarqand, attacked Ladakh in 939 AH. Earlier, he had dispatched his son Sultan Iskandar Khan, under the authority of Mirza Haider Gorgan, to Ladakh. Later, he himself joined them in Ladakh. After the conquest of Ladakh, it was decided that since there was no room in this small country for so much soldiery, the Sultan himself should, accompanied by a thousand soldiers, direct his attention towards Baltistan, while Sultan Iskandar Khan and Mirza Haider Gorgan should, with the full remaining army, carry out an attack on Kashmir.

Mirza Haider writes in his Tarikh-e-Rashidi: "Sultan Said Khan, Shah of Yarqand, set out in 939 AH with one thousand soldiers from Maryul (Ladakh) for Balti (Baltistan) and reached it in the beginning of winter. Behran Co surrendered, and presented himself in his service. All the rest of the Balti herdsmen offered resistance. Under the guidance of Behram Co, the Sultan, in the very first attack, conquered the fort of Ashghar (Shigar) which is the capital of the entire Balti. The men were slain. Women and property fell to the lot of the victorious soldiers. Besides, the mountain region was conquered; though, of course, the solid and strong fortresses and mountain dwellings were left alone. And in early spring the Shah set out from Balti back for Ladakh."

However, it is not mentioned in the book of which part of Baltistan this Behram Co was the Raja. There was a Raja by this name also in Skardu, but since the reign of Behram of Skardu does not coincide with the attack on Baltistan by Sultan Saeed Khan, the Behran Co referred to in the excerpt of Tarikh-i-Rashidi quoted above, must undoubtedly be Behram of Khapulu. This is further verified by succeeding events.

Concerning the attack on Baltistan by Sultan Said Khan, one tradition exists in the annals of Shigar, though nothing seems to be known about it in Skardu, which leads one to think that perhaps the Sultan did not go to Skardu; and yet it does not seem probable that after having conquered Shigar, the Sultan should have left Skardu untouched. However, from among the events during Behram's reign, this much has been ascertained in Khapulu that one Hashim Hor (Yarqandi) invaded Khapulu via Kundus, looted and plundered the whole country and captured and took away with him to Yarqand the people of Khapulu as well as Korkor and Behram.

The Raja of Skardu took advantage of this destruction of Khapulu, seized the entire territory and appointed his governor (kharpon) in Khapulu. This man was a great oppressor and a tyrant. For three or four years his subjects put up with his tyranny. Finally they could stand it no longer and decided to revolt. Ultimately it was decided that four men by name of Mullah Hassan, Bekartroce, Khoshin Albalde and Lamkhan Meg Singe should be dispatched to Yarqand in order to search for and bring back Korkor and Behram.

The invasion referred to in this tradition can only be the one carried out by Sultan Saeed Khan, because during this time, there was no other invasion of Khapulu by Yarqandis, though the circumstance under which the Sultan captured Korkor and Behram (the Rajas of Khapulu) and took them away with him to Yarqand, seems, in view of Mirza Haider's description, evidently false. The Sultan could surely not have made a prisoner of a Raja who had offered him his services to the extent of bringing about the conquest of Shigar under his own guidance. Of course, what can well be true is that after the Sultan's return to Ladakh, the Raja of Skardu attacked Khapulu for the reason that the Raja of Khapulu had collaborated with the invaders and brought about the ruin of Shigar and Skardu; Korkor and Behram, defeated, could have taken to flight and come to the Sultan in Ladakh for help. However, by the time they arrived in Ladakh, the Sultan had already left again, so that they were obliged to go after him and since the Sultan fell ill on the way and died, their objective was not achieved, and they were forced to travel on to Yarqand. These circumstances alone make the story of the four men going to Yarqand with the news of the revolt plausible.

However, these four men arrived in Yarqand and found out the whereabouts of Behram. Korkor had already died before their arrival. At first, Behram did not like the idea of leaving behind the tomb of his brother and going back to the turmoil of Khapulu, but ultimately, at the insistence of

these men, and the ambitious prospect of rulership, he agreed and set out, carrying with him the bones of his deceased brother. Nevertheless, he was a prudent man and did not dare to go into Khapulu to confront the Raja of Skardu with only four men behind him. So, leaving his companions in Nobrah, he went to Ladakh to see the Gyalpo and returned to Nobrah after having made arrangements with him for help. Meanwhile, the envoys had informed the officers in Khapulu of Behram's arrival in Nobrah, so that they could go ahead with the preparations of a revolt. Besides, some men from Khapulu also went on to Nobrah. Taking them all with him, Behram arrived secretly in Sermon. Here, the prominent men of Khapulu sent him a message to say that accompanied by the army from the villages adjacent to Sermon, he should come by night to Brah Haujori and stay in hiding at the ridge there; that the next morning they would take the Kharpon along with his men to Sharghan for polo-playing, during which time he, Behram, should enter the fort and proclaim his taking of it by a beating of drums. They would then slay the Kharpon along with his men. Behram thus seized his ancestral fort and heritage. He gradually extended his sway over the entire territory, put the affairs of state in order and began to rule in peace and security. His astute reign and assistance from the Gyalpo of Ladakh ensured that the Raja of Skardu did not dare to take his revenge on him.

Later, he married the dughter of the Gyalpo of Ladakh and led a happy life. This Gyalmo bore him Yabgo Sikam who later became his successor.

Yabgo Sikam (1550 - 1590 AD)

During the reign of Yabgo Sikam, two brothers, Syed Shah Nasir Tusi and Syed Ali Tusi arrived from Yarqand via Saltoro in Khapalu, took up residence in Thaghas and busied themselves in the teaching of Islam. In Thaghas, on the banks of the canal, they built a small mosque which is stil extant though in a ruined condition. On its arch runs an inscription: "wazir fa´ ibrahim minal bait ismail rabana taqabal mina ank ant alsami´ ala´lim tarikh ghaib" (Tr. note: a verse from the Quran containing a numerical code indicating that this construction dates from the year 1012 AH).

The route from Khapulu to Yarqand was via the Kundus stream over the Siachen Glacier and down to the Yarqand valley over the west of the glacier. From here it led either through the Karakorum Pass or through the Yarqand valley to the country of Yarqand. A widening of the glacier later closed this route just as the ancient route from Nobrah

to Yarqand through the Shyoq valley has been obstructed by the widening of the northern branch of the glacier near the Khandan stream. One has now to cross the river Shyoq, make a long detour, and come back on to this ancient road. Traces of human habitationg are still found on the Siachen Glacier and they have been inspected and investigated by my Italian friend Giotto Dainelli who climbed this glacier from the direction of the river Nobrah and crossing it, descended into the Yarqand River Valley. On this occasion I was myself present at both these places.

During the times when this road between Khapulu and Yarqand was opened, the Yarqandi Kazakh used to enter Khapulu through Kundus whenever they found an oportunity in spring, pillaging and killing, distressing the people greatly. With the enlargement of the Siachen Glacier this road became inaccessible, saving the populace from these murderous inroads. This incident dates from the time of Shah Nasir Tusi´s presence in Khapulu and it is also ascribed to him as one of his miracles. In any case, it proves that this natural phenomenon occurred at the time of Shah Nasir Tusi´s sojourn in Khapulu.

Glaciers usually start from the top of a mountain range where the snow falls in great quantities. When too much snow collects, the pressure forces the ice to slide downwards, sometimes for long distances, till it reaches a spot where the temperature is too high for it and it melts. Ignorant folk see this as the retreating of a glacier. Actually, a glacier only goes forwards, not backwards.

SECTION THREE

The Division of the Government of Khapulu

Yabgo Sikam had three sons and, during his life-time, he divided his kingdom amongst them in the following manner:

Yabgo Ibrahim, Raja of Salang (1590 - 1605 AD)

To Yabgo Pambar or Ibrahim he gave away Salang and other villages on the right bank of tthe river Shyoq right up to Doghni. To Beg Aman-al-Ma´roof Bewan Co he consigned the entire lower territory of Kiris below Doghni.

Yabgo Turab Khan, Raja of Thorse Khar (1590 - 1600 AD)

To Yabgo Turab Khan he entrusted the entire upper territory of Khapulu and Chorbat.

On the deah of Yabgo Sikam, his three sons continued to reign in the territories allotted to them. No important event of their reigns has been ascertained.

Yabgo Sher Ghazi (1605 - 1620 AD)

On the death of Yabgo Ibrahim, his son Sher Ghazi succeeded him. During his reign, Ali Sher Khan Anchan made an alliance with he Rajas of Shigar and Salang Khan, and jointly attacked Ladakh (as mentioned earlier) and making Gyalpo Jamyang Namgyal a prisoner, brought him to Skardu. Here, Yabgo Sher Ghazi, with the aim of keeping his connections with him on a firm footing, married his daughter Argyal Khatun to Jamyang Namgyal, on the agreement that Jamyang Namgyal´s children by his former wife should be debarred from succession and only the children by Argyal Khatoon should be entitled to rule. Following his arrangement, rulership was restored to Jamyang Namgyal and he was sent back to Ladakh and had a son by Argyal Khatun, Singe Namgyal.

On the death of Jamyang Namgyal, Gyalmo Argyal Khatoon passed her days of widowhood in tthe palace of Hondar in Bonrah. Here, with the purpose of gaining merit for

the soul of her husband, she had two grand serais built, which exist to this day. She also built a sacred mosque near her palace and she is buried near this mosque. When I went to Hondar, I saw in a small garden, a ruined grave and a platform next to it. I discovered that this was the grave of Singe Namgyal's mother, who had built the platform and pulpit of the mosque. I was told that there had been a magnificent tomb over this grave with a canopy of gold over it.

I had the tomb repaired and later discovered that the mosque also had been rebuilt by Munshi Jamshid, the successor of the late Mr.Johnson.

This Gyalmo had received a tract of land in Nobrah. After her death, a portion of taxes continued to be paid to the Raja of Khapulu for a long time in the form of 2 maunds of phuli (Tr.note: probably rice) and 12 maunds of salt. Mr. Johnson, the Wazir of Ladakh later changed it to 32 khal of grain and 1 male sheep. This was also stopped at the time of land demarcation.

Yabgo Raheem Khan, Raja of Salang (1620 -1650 AD)

On Yabgo Sher Ghazi's death, his son Rahim Khan succeeded him. He was married to the daughter of the Gyalpo of Ladakh who bore him two sons, Hatim Khan and Azam Khan. Hatim Khan married Daulat Khatun, sister of Shah Murad, thus consolidating relations both with Ladakh and Skardu.

Yabgo Mir Khan, Raja of Thorse Khar (1600 - 1615 AD)

Turab Khan's son was Yabgo Meer Khan who succeeded him in Khapulu and Chorbat and his son Husain Khan in turn succeeded him. Husain Khan's Rani Hayat Khatun was the sister of Shah Maran, Raja of Skardu.

SECTION FOUR

The United Kingdom of Khapulu

Yabgo Hatim Khan Azam (1650 - 1715 AD)

On the death of Yabgo Rahim Khan, his son Hatim Khan succeeded him. He was very powerful and competent and after acoomplishing great feats he finally, through his excellent management of affairs, established a united kingdom of Khapulu.

In those days, the kings of Skardu were embroiled in civil war and conflict with Shigar. Taking advantage of this, Hatim Khan plotted with the Gyalpo of Ladakh and had Thorse Khar attacked, taking Babar and Yaqub with their mother prisoners to Ladakh, where they were incarcerated in Khar Yu. The Gyalpo annexed the entire territory of Chorbat above Poin to the kingdom of Ladakh, and united the rest of the territory of Thorse Khar, i.e,. Khapulu with the kingdom of Hatim Khan.

During his period, as has already been recorded in the narration of events about Skardu, Shah Murad freed Babar and Yaqub from the imprisonment of the Gyalpo of Ladakh, and reinstated Babar to his ancestral heritage. He also separated the district of Konis from Salang and joined it with Khapulu, and fixed Phong Naq Pari as the frontier between the two kingdoms.

Babar, having reigned successfully, died without a son and his brother Yaqub succeeded him. At the death of Shah Murad in Skardu, a rebellion broke out again. Hatim Khan, having ascertained that there was no possibility then of any assistance from Skardu for Yaqub, tricked him and again seized Thorse Khar. Yaqub was helpless and in order to take his complaint to the Nawab of Kashmir, went to Kargil with his wife and children, leaving them there and moving on to Srinagar. He fell ill and died on the way at Gandsurang. His destitute family took up the trade of carpentry to survive and their descendants still live in Kargil.

One of Hatim's companions settled down in Dras. His descendants are respectfully called Co-mal. They exert much influence there, for which reason one member of the

family is a the Zaildar of Dras.

Under these circumstances, Hatim Khan once again acquired the kingdoms of Salang as well as Thorse Khar, and he became the sole ruler of a united Khapulu. His ambitions grew. He collected the armies from his entire territory and, under the command of his brother Azam Khan, carried out an attack on Skardu. Azam Khan conquered Gol and then set out for Skardu. Mohammad Rafi Khan did not have the courage to oppose him, and took refuge in the Kharpoche. Azam Khan laid siege to the fort,looting, pillaging and devastating the countryside around Skardu. He returned with a booty of precious stones of Singe Stagho and Totni Amrimonco from Skardu and Shighran from Thayor. He also looted the beautiful stone pillars of Kvardo.

In recompense of their victory, Hatim Khan made a permanent endowment to the miliary chiefs Bota and Achkar, whereby they were entitled to a seventh of all gifts presented to the Raja. This grant is still valid and the descendants of Bota even now collect a seventh of the valuable gifts brought to the Raja.

Yabgo Hatim Khan developed the territory,and, in the districts of Kandi, Ghorse, Doghni and Brah, greatly advanced agriculture through an expansion of irrigation. His military accomplishments have already been referred to in connection with the history of Skardu.

Yabgo Dabla Khan (1715 - 1765 AD)

On Hatim Khan's death, his son Dabla Khan succeeded him. It has not been possible to ascertain much about the events of his reign except that he colonized the districts of Ghor, Set and Pharol, and that during his reign there was a rebellion by the Rajas of Kiris and Nar, both of whom were quelled.

At this time, two brothers named Arif and Abu Said came ino his country via Kashmir. Syed Arif took up residence in Thaghas and Abu Said in Kiris. The present Jamia Masjid of Thaghas is the one built by Syed Arif, and that of Kiris by Abu Said. To his day, these glorious edifices bear witness to the courage and endeavours of their founders. In course of time, the two brothers succeeded in creating a following among all the people of Khapulu and Skardu and they wrote a book called Figh-i-Nur Bakhshi which is believed to be a combination of Shia and Sunni tenets. I myself have not seen this book because the clergy avoids showing it to outsiders.

Syed Arif had only one child, a daughter named Sharf-un-Nisar, who was then married to Syed Abu Said's son Mukhtar. Thus, by a hereditary right, Syed Mukhtar became the sole religious leader of the entire territories of Skardu and Khapulu. He had a son named Ishaq, whose descendants still survive in Kiris and the surrounding areas, though they have nothing left now except the name of their forefathers.

Yabgo Mohammad Ali Khan (1765 - 1800 AD)

On the death of Dabla Khan, his son Muhammad Ali Khan became the heir. An able administrator, he caused many new villages to be inhabited and greatly encouraged further setling in many districts. Ambition coerced him to attack Kharmang, but there was little killing and he returned after having made peace there.

In Shigar, a conflict over succession developed between Quli Khan and Azam Khan. Quli Khan asked the Raja of Skardu for help and drove away Azam Khan, who went to Khapulu. Mohammad Ali Khan offered him help and got him to seize Shigar. Quli Khan fled to Skardu.

Yabgo Yahya Khan (1800 - 1815 AD)

Muhammad Ali was succeeded by his son Yahya Khan. During his reign, Quli Khan, with assistance from Skardu, again drove Azam Khan away and seized control of Shigar. Whereupon Yahya Khan attacked Shigar and once again got Azam Khan in power there. At this time, Ali Sher Khan II was the Raja of Skardu. These events have already been recorded in detail in the description of Shigar.

During his reign, Khapulu was attacked by Ladakh. He faced the Ladakhi army at Ardwaraq, defeated it and imprisoned its commander, Ayukalun Pankhapa.

Mehdi Ali Khan (1815 - 1820 AD)

Yahya Khan had three sons: Daulat Ali Khan, Mahmood Shah (known as Mehdi Ali Khan) and Muhammad Shah. The father's death started a dispute among the brothers. The second brother Mehdi Ali Khan was the most intelligent and shrewd. He made a secret pact with the Gyalpo of Ladakh, whereby the left bank of the river Shyoq, Pari Khanasha in the direction of Khapulu, and on the right bank Pori Lonkha and Zenkha in the direction of Abadan, were fixed as the boundaries betwen Khapulu and Ladakh. The whole territory of Chorbat was given over to the Gyalpo of Ladakh, in return for

which the Gyalpo agreed to provide military assistance to establish Mehdi Ali Khan's authority and dominion over Khapulu. At the same time, Mehdi Ali Khan managed to acquire the support of most of his subjects. In short, through these stratagems and the help of the Ladakh army led by Lonpu Hodar, Mehdi Ali Khan seized Thorse Khar and established his dominion over the whole of Khapulu. He also made both his brothers prisoners and sent them away to Ladakh, where the Gyalpo limited their movement to Nobrah. In this tumult, however, Mohammad Ali Khan, the son of Daulat Ali Khan escaped via Ganchhe Kharmang, went to the Raja Ahmad Shah of Skardu and took refuge with him.

Raja Ahmad Shah, in support of Mohammad Ali Khan, had Khapulu attacked by his nephew Abdal Khan. Yabgo Mehdi Ali Khan inflicted on him a crushing defeat, took all the commanders of the army including Abdal Khan prisoner and imprisoned Abdal Khan in a place called Yarman in Dagar Tanbar in the terrritory of Nobrah. Raja Ahmad Shah tried every means to free the prisoners liberated, but Mehdi refused to comply. Finally, for the release of Abdal Khan, he offered as ransom the equivalent of his weight in gold, which also Mehdi did not accept. Thinking that by remaining alive Abdal Khan would serve as an excuse for interference by Ahmad Shah, Mehdi had him killed in prison with a nail driven into his brain. His tomb still exists there.

Ahmad Shah took a bitter revenge, the details of which follow:

At this time,the people of Khapulu became divided into two groups. One group supported the reigning Raja of Khapulu, the other supported Daulat Ali Khan and Mohammad Shah, whom Mehdi had kept in the custody of the Gyalpo of Ladakh. Mohammad Ali Khan carried on a secret correspondence with the supporters of his father and instigated them to rebel against Mehdi Ali Khan. Some men came over from Khapulu to Skardu to meet with Raja Ahmad Shah. A plan was hatched for the army of Skardu to enter Khapulu, coinciding with a locally fomented rebellion. The plan was carried out and internal dissension rendered Mehdi Ali Khan vulnerable. He was taken prisoner and dispatched to Skardu. Here, Raja Ahmad Shah imprisoned him in the prison of Ghoti Changara and made him undergo severe hardships and torture, which ultimately caused his death.

Mohammad Ali Khan then asked for posession of his ancestral inheritance. The Raja of Skardu was first evasive, then he imprisoned Mohammad Ali Khan in Skardu, appointed Yulchung Karim as the Kharpon and annexed Khapulu to Skardu.

Raja Ahmad Shah's Rule of Skardu through Yulchung Karim Kharpon (1820 - 1840 AD)

Yulchung tried to reign through force, but the people became very restive under his oppression and tyranny. There spread among them a general feeling of anger against Raja Ahmad Shah for his ill-treatment of Mehdi Ali Khan and his breach of faith with Mohammad Ali Khan. Forgetting past differences, they all united and waited for an opportunity.

At this time when Wazir Zorawar Singh Kalhoria had established full sway over Poreg and Ladakh. There was rumour of his impending attack on Baltistan and Raja Ahmad Shah sent for Yulchung Karim to confer with him. Seizing the opportune moment, Haider Khan (a cousin of Daulat Khan and at that time a commander of Raja Ahmad Shah's army in Khapulu), went to every village and took an oath of allegiance from the people, ordering them to be prepared for battle without telling anyone whom the battle was to be against. When Karim's brother Rustam who acted as Karim's deputy in his absence, learnt of this, he immediately sent the news to Raja Ahmad Shah. The latter immediately sent Karim back to Khapulu with an army. Karim was accorded an enthusiastic welcome in Khapulu. Haider Khan himself marched out a long distance with the people of Khapulu to receive him, thus removing all suspicions. Karim asked Haider Khan against whom had he prepared the people to fight. Haider Khan mentioned the rumours of the army of Jammu praparing to invade Skardu and said that the oath had been administered to ready the people to oppose the enemy. This answer quite satisfied Karim and, foolishly enough, he greatly appreciated this service rendered by Haider Khan, a mistake for which he had to pay heavily.

A few days later, Karim received the news that Wazir Zorawar Singh's army had set out from Ladakh towards Khapulu. He set out with the combined armies of 8,000 troops from Khapulu and Skardu to Chorbat under the command of Haider Khan. In Kostang, Karim received information that a part of Wazir Zorawar Singh's army under the command of Syed Mudin Shah had reached Brah Hanola Poin and had seized the Poin fort. Karim conferred with Haider Khan and it was decided that Karim should engage the Dogra army on the Poin ridge in Khapulu, while Haider Khan would cross the Shyoq, reach Saksa through Tortok and attack the enemy from the rear. Accordingly, Haider Khan arrived with practically the entire army of Khapulu in Tortok, crossed the Shyoq under cover of darkness and arrived in Saksa by daybreak.

Wazir Zorawar Singh had sent a few soldiers from Ladakh to Nobrah to bring the landowners (zamindars) of Nobrah to help Syed Mudin Shah and they arrived in Saksa with Daulat Ali Khan and Mohammad Ali Khan. Haider Khan conferred with these two and they all agreed to surrender to Syed Mudin Shah. They joined him and sent a message through their servants Bota and Barkanpa to Karim: "Haider Khan and Daulat Ali Khan together with the landowners of Khapulu have placed themselves under the Dogra army. Karim was now free to do as he pleased."

Enraged by Haider Khan's deception, Karim shot Bota on the spot with a rifle. Deeply disappointed and in fear of his own life, he retreated with his army towards Skardu. He was followed by the Dogra army with Daulat Ali Khan and Haider Khan and they arrived in Khapulu. The people of Khapulu welcomed them, for they were now saved from the oppression of the tyrant Karim. They lent every assistance to the Dogra forces in supplying them with provisions etc. The army halted there three days and then set out for Skardu. (Tr. note: the author was an employee of the Dogra government. His account can thus be subjective).

Meanwhile Karim reached Kiris, sent for reinforcements from Skardu and made preparations to oppose the Dogra army in Kiris, where he fought them with great courage. According to two varying sources, the battle lasted either three days or seven days and he did not allow the Dogra forces to pass through. However, he lost his nerve on hearing that Wazir Zorawar Singh, having already conquered Kartakhsha and other places, had just arrived in full force at Parkuta. He gave up the fight and retreated with his troops to Skardu.

Syed Mudin Shah stayed for three days in Kiris. Learning of Wazir Zorawar Singh's arrival, he crossed the Indus and joined up with the Wazir's army.

Daulat Ali Khan in Authority (1840 - 1860 AD)

During the battle of Kiris, Raja Ahmed Shah had released Mohammad Ali Khan from prisont and sent him to Kiris with the object of instigating Daulat Ali Khan and Haider Khan to follow the Raja of Skardu. However, he joined up with them on reaching Kiris. At Gol, Syed Mudin Shah presented Daulat Ali Khan, Mohammad Ali Khan, Mohammad Shah and Haider Khan to the Wazir, praising the services rendered by them. The Wazir, in recognition of their services, sent them to Khapulu to their ancestral kingdoms, only taking Haider Khan with a few armed men to Skardu with him.

The Wazir spent the winter in Skardu after conquering it and set out in early spring for Ladakh to subjugate Lhasa. He reached Khapulu and stayed there for a week. Then, taking Daulat Ali Khan, Mohammad Shah, Mohammad Ali Khan and Haider Khan with him, set out for Ladakh. However, Daulat Ali Khan he sent back from Ladakh, and kept the rest of the three with some soldiers from Khapulu in Ladakh in order to take them with him to Lhasa.

In Ladakh, Mohammad Shah contracted smallpox and died, while Haider Khan suddenly died while bathing in the spring Sabu. Some people believe this was brought about by Daulat Ali Khan's machinations. Mohammad Ali Khan took the army of Khapulu and went with Wazir Zorawar Singh upto Porang, and there, having displayed his devotion to the Wazir, was taken prisoner by the armies of Lhasa.

The hardships which Wazir Zorawar Singh and the Dogra army had to undergo at Porang have already been recorded in detail elsewhere. Following this devastation, the Lhasa armies seized Ladakh, and rebellion broke out in Baltistan. Haider Khan, the Raja of Shigar, put an end to the Dogra government and established his sway over the land. All the other rajas also began to claim sovereignty.

In order to quell the rebellion in Baltistan, an expeditionary force was dispatched from Jammu via Sord and Kargil under the command of Wazir Lakhpat Kishtwariya. He took the fort of Kharpoche, causing Haider Khan to flee from Skardu. The latter set out for Yarqand through Thale and Saltoro with eighty companions. On learning of this, Daulat Ali Khan had them arrested, taken to Khapulu and finally brought before Wazir Lakhpat in Skardu. This so pleased the Wazir that all land previously granted to Daulat Ali was left intact.

Mohammad Ali Khan (1860 - 1880 AD)

When Mohammad Ali Khan was released by the Lhasa armies, he presented himself to Diwan Hari Chand, the commander of the Ladakhi expeditionary force. The Diwan took him along with him to Jammu, where he stayed as a state guest and took a wife. On the death of Daulat Ali Khan, he returned and succeeded him.

Hatim Khan II (1880 - 1900 AD)

Mohammad Ali Khan's son was Hatim Khan II, whose son Nasir Ali Khan is the present Raja of Khapulu. He is considered among the Rajas of Baltistan as an enlightened and

distinguished Raja.

The Rajas of Kiris are a branch of this family. Since there is no separate record of battles attributed to them, I have not considered it necessary to write about them as distinct from the others, and have deemed it sufficient to include only their genealogies. The present Raja is Mohammad Ali Khan.

CHAPTER FIVE

ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE, MINERALS, INDUSTRY AND TRADE IN BALTISTAN

Baltistan, like Ladakh, can be classified as a rainless land where no agriculture is possible without irrigation. However, Baltistan is at a lower altitude and receives some snow and scattered rainfall in some places, thus making it less cold and dry than Ladakh, though the upper reaches of the streams are equally cold.

The valleys of the Shyoq and Indus are under cultivation. The crops for the Rabi season are wheat, garam (chick-peas?), peas, pulses, baqlah (a kind of bean) and rapeseed; for the Kharif season, the crops are Italian millet (china), common millet, buckwheat and other coarse grain. The ground is normaly fertile, but it is necessary to use fertilizer, for which no proper system exists. Rice and maize are traditionally not grown in Baltistan and attempts to introduce these have not gained popularity.

All vegetables planted here are usually of a good quality. The natives usually grow karam (Tr. note: a leafy vegetable used as spinach). Turnips are grown in most places, and the turnip can be said to be the true vegetable of Baltistan. Chilis, horseradishes, carrots and onions are also produced here. The author himself planted cauliflower, karam, potatoes and other vegetables, all with complete success. Watermelons, melons and canteloupes abound here, although the seeds for these has been imported from Khotan. Rashfa(?) is widely cultivated for use as animal fodder.

The mild climate of the land encourages the growth of fruit. The most common fruit is the seedless mulberry (tut) and the large mulberry (shahtut) both of which are widely used; this is followed by apricots, of which there are many varieties. It is said that the best quality apricots were brought from Turkestan into this country. The apricots of Baltistan are excellent and present in large quantities. Gardalu (plums?) also grows here to some extent. Peaches are also very good here. The lower Indus valley grows large quantities of varied and high quality grape and redcurrant. The apples and pears approximate the quality of those found in Kashmir and are even thought to be better. Walnuts are grown plentifully in Baltistan. Mehta Mangal

introduced almonds here and these grow well, although their cultivation is not very prevalent. Even pomegranates grow in the lower regions. It is not the custom of this land to grow grapevines on stakes: grapevines are usually made to climb on mulberry trees.

Conifer forests of Chir pine abound in Baltistan, especially along the streams of Basho and Rondu. These trees are of a good quality, but has limited usage as building material, the wood of the poplar being favoured. Boats built of pine are used on the Shyoq and Indus rivers. Willow (baid) is also used for construction. Poplar and willow flourish, yielding timber for buildings. Shade-giving plane (chinar) and willow species grow here. The musk willow grows Shigar and in Skardu proper and possibly elsewhere. Padam (juniper?) trees are also found along streams and many streams have birch trees growing along their banks.

Gold is of the highest importance, the centres lying in Bashah, Braldo, Parkuta, Saltoro and in the rivers of Shigar, Indus and Shyoq. The valleys of Shigar Bashah and Braldo are especially rich in minerals and it is the author's opinion that a fairly large amount of gold is received from this country. (Tr. note: this is a reference to alluvial gold collected by washing in Baltistan).

Much serpentine (zehr-mohra) is found at the stream by the settlement of Shigar. Utensils such as teapots, cups, tumblers, flower-vases, etc., are made from this stone and exported to Kashmir and Hindustan. Serpentine is also found near the Chotron stream, but not exploited there.

The upper reaches of all the streams yield crystal (balor), the best quality being found near Braldo and Shakarthang, as well as in Rondu.

There is a mine producing marble of good quality in the region of Kwardo on the mountain facing Skardu. The rajas of Skardu have used this marble in the buildings of Kharpoche and Tangmoq, remnants of which have been used in some of the official buildings of Skardu. Balck marble is found in the area of Gulabpur & Chotron. Professer Dainelli has told me that whole mountainous region from Kwardo to Basha is full of marble.

In Wasoned in the Shigar valley there is an emerald mine, but it is said that the stone is of an inferior qualiy. A mica mine has also been reported at the Nyaslo stream in the Basha valley.

Salajit(Tr. note: a bitumenous tar used as medicine and thought to be an aphrodisiac) is mined in the Rondu Area.

Copper sulphate is mined in the area of Chorbat. Iron mines exist in the areas of Nend and Chotron located respectively in Shigar and Braldo, but these mines are not worked.

Pharda in Khapulu and Daso in Shigar have lead mines, but no advantage is being taken of them.

There is a report jasper existing in Rondu and in the area of Gamrad. A soft white stone (Tr. probably steatite) is found in the areas of Chorbat, Braldo, Basha and Basho, which is used for making cooking utensils used as far away as Kargil and Ladakh.

An antimony mine is located in the area of Stak in Rondu. Alum is found in the Ghowari stream and in Ashkopo.

Hot springs are located at Choro and Besal at the streams of Basha and Braldo. Apart from Chotron, the other springs are exceedingly hot. The spring at Braldo spurts water like a fountain. People suffering from various afflictions come and bathe in the waters of these springs, particularly at Chotron.

As far as traditional industry is concerned, Baltistan is a very backward country; nevertheless, it is much better than Kargil on one side and Ladakh on the other. In Shigar and in certain other areas of Baltistan, good grades of woolen shawls and garments are manufactured, though they do not compare well with Kashmiri shawls. Woolen garments are left unembroidered.

The manufacture of utensils from serpentine exists as mentioned earlier. Stone mortars are made for local use only.

The external trade of Baltistan mainly consists of the export of sweet apricot seed kernels, several thousand maunds of which are exported to Hindustan. In second place is the export of dried apricots, which are exported to Hindustan and to Lhasa. Butter is exported in large quantities to Ladakh.

Woolen shawls and blankets are usually exported to Ladakh and Lhasa, although a small quantity of these are also exported to Kashmir. Most of the woolen items produced are consumed locally, and are greatly valued for their softness.

Stone utensils are exported to Sangi, Ladakh and Kargil and the green stone (serpentine) utensils are exported to Kashmir and Hindustan, where they are greatly valued.

Woolen shawls and blankets are also imported into Baltistan from Ladakh. From Hindustan, the major imports into Baltistan are all kinds of cloth, tea, iron, sugar and gur (raw rock sugar) and similar other items of common everyday use.

Some butter and sheep are also exported to Gilgit. This trade with other countries is a good way of increasing the national income, which, however, is not enough to feed the entire population. People therefore seek employment as labourers and servants in Kashmir or in the hilly areas of Hindustan in spring. This work bridges the gap in the national income. There is no opportunity for this kind of labour in Baltistan.

Generally, the people are poorer than in Ladakh and Kargil, but far ahead in culture and good manners. The tradition of learning Persian first started in Baltistan in this region. The younger generation is now learning English and are entering into government service.

CHAPTER SIX

SOURCES OF GOVERNMENT INCOME AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

This subject is interesting insofar as it reveals the true state of the administration and its level of organization. This chapter will summarize both the traditional and the more recent aspects of state income.

In the days of the rajas of Baltistan, it was not customary to collect cash revenue. For the expenditure of the raja and his family, a portion of each yol was taxed. The yol was a unit of land measure correlated with yield and was reckoned thus: an area of land that yielded twelve khal of grain was one yol. One khal equals twenty-five English seers. This amount of grain in Skardu is yielded by two kanals of land. By this reckoning, one yol equals fourteen kanal, or three acres of land.

There are three grades of yol:
1) Tarkchos Yol, meaning the area directly under control of the wazirs and other employees directly in the raja's service or in his household.

Any person who rendered genuine service to the raja was exempt from paying revenue on these areas. A token of four rupees was collected as tribute from these lands in case of a death or marrige.

All other people holding this grade of land and not holding any position or post had to pay a revenue of the following items per yol: one khal and five bare of wheat, one bare butter, and one sheep.

2) Gand: this was land belonging to the raja and leased out to cultivators with a land rent of twelve khal of wheat. The land was basically the property of the raja and was only leased to the people who lived on it.

3) Raqba-i-zamindari (Tr."farmland"): this was the name given to the land that people had brought under cultivation through their own efforts and expenditure. The revenue realised from these lands was different in different places and with different rules. However, a general rule did exist, and one paid the following per yol:

One khal and five bare of wheat
One khal and five bare of barley or garam(?)
Two bare of butter
Four chickens
One sheep or goat.

Villages or farmers who produced gold were exempt from land taxes and instead had to pay half to one tolo ofgold as revenue (The weight of one tolo is eight masha, which was not worth more than twelve rupees at the time of the rajas). This was realised from them whether they produced gold or not.

Uncultivated pasture areas near the stream were used by nomadic herdsmen, who payed the following taxes per yol of land:
Woolen cloth, one than in length
Butter, seven bare in weight
One sheep or goat

In villages where the wild goat or ibex was hunted, a nominal tax of six hides of this animal was levied on each district. If no hides were forthcoming, an alternative tax of three khal of butter was levied from each village.

There was no fixed amount determined for wood and grass. The farmers had to supply it whenever it was demanded.

Flocks taken to the high pastures in summer were also taxed. The raja's representative collected one day's yield of milk per herd, converted it into butter and sent it to the raja.

A tribute of ten bare grain, one bare butter and firewood was paid by each household at the birth of an heir of the raja.

Nang-Jang was the name give to self-cultivated land, or land cultivated for the raja, and no revenue was realised from such land.

After the Dogra conquest, the collection of revenue was left in the hands of the rajas. Bhagwan Singh Thanadar (governor) and the Dogra army in Skardu were paid (per yol) one khal grain, one bare butter, one load of wood and salt according to need.

Apart from the above taxes, the Dogra rulers exacted through the rajas a tax of three rupees per yol from the common peasant. This arrangement continued to the time of

the governor Kedaro, who then took the task of revenue collection away from the rajas and collected it directly for the state. Only the personal tributes to the rajas were allowed to be retained.

Kedaro alswo revised the previous revenue of three rupees per yol, and raised it to four. This could also be paid in kind at the rate of three khal and ten bare for each rupee. He also retained the old tax with the following changes: instead of one bare butter, he fixed it at one-and-a-half seers of ghi. He increased it further by one bare of salt and one bare of dal (pulses) per yol. He fixed the former unspecified amount of wood at one maund. For those villages that were unable to supply wood because of the distances involved, he accepted grass instead of wood.

Kedaro exacted tribute from the rajas at Nauroz and other festive occasions, giving them gifts in return. Details of the tributes (nazrana) and of the reurn gifts (khalat) are as follows:

Bigger rajas: tribute, one hundred rupees; gift, one pair of double woolen shawls.

Smaller rajas: tribute, fifty rupees; gift, one double woolen shawl.

Wazirs: tribute, ten rupees; gift, half a than of muslin.

Nambardars: tribute, three rupees; gift four or five yards of cotton cloth (lattha).

After Kedaro, Meha Mangal planted countless trees and increased settlements. After streamlining the land tenure system of Baltistan, he fixed revenues for the new settlements. No change in taxes took place after that. In 1955 of the Bikrami calendar, a legal administration order was issued, and Mr. Clark designed a comprehensive revenue system during Mr. Talbot's time, through which all defects were rectified.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RULERS OF BALTISTAN DURING THE DOGRA PERIOD

In the initial stages of Dogra rule, Baltistan was included in the administrative unit of Poreg. During the time of the State Council, Gilgit and Ladakh were designated as frontier areas and a separate tehsil was made in Kargil. Approximately three years later, Gilgit and Ladakh were separated into two separate administrative units, and Baltistan was divided into two tehsils.

Kedaro Thanadar (governor) (1908 - 1920 Bikrami)

In the early days of Dogra rule, the governor of Baltistan used to live in Skardu. Another thanadar used to be under him in Kargil. The first ruler nominated by the state was Bhagwan Singh. After him came Gosaon, Karam Singh, Jowahar Singh and others, but nothing noteworthy of their period has come to light. The administration remained more or less in the hands of the rajas. Later on, Kedaro (1908-1920 Bikrami) Thanadar interfered with the rights of the rajas and took the collection of revenue into his own hands and started another system of taxation. He brought a modern administration to this land and increased he influence of the state at the expense of the rajas. He thereby increased the returns of taxation realised by he state. The rajas complained about him, but he stuck to his principles and did not change or modify his practice. Kedaro has been praised for his sagacious administration.

Wazir Labajo Kardar

Kedaro was succeeded by Wazir Labajo Kishtwaria, who built a magnificent palace for himself on a branch of the Satpar sttream that passes through Skardu. This has now been divided up into sections that house a dispensary, a post-office, a telegraph office and the residence of the tehsildar of Skardu.

Mehta Mangal Kardar (1932 - 1942 Bikrami)

In 1932 of the Bikrami calendar, the famous ruler of Ladakh, Mehta Mangal was appointed the Kardar of Baltistan. His services in increasing the state income, development of agriculture, increase of amenities to the people and to government employees stationed there will not be forgotten by the people of the area for a long time to come. He had trees planted from Sorad to Dras along the valleys, along the Indus valley, in the Shigar valley upto Basha and Braldo, and along the Shyoq river, transforming the country into one large garden. It is said that 500,000 willows and poplars and more than 50,000 fruit trees were planted during his governorship. He also had more than a hundred gardens laid out at various places. No future ruler of this area could compete with him in this field, as any subsequent work done by ohers was immediately accredited to Mehta Mangal.

In order to provide government employees with grass and firewood, he had large areas of forest land kept apart (locally called rakh). These areas were supervised by government employees, whose job was to conserve these forests and not burden the local people unnecessarily by appointing them to look after this forest land.

He took so much interest in building that no room for further development was left. He constructed a magnificent building in Skardu named Ranbir Gadh, which housed the courts, his residence and housing for all government personnel. This building is still used for this purpose with minor modifications.

He renovated the prisons, making separate cells for prisoners serving terms and prisoners held for interrogation. He had houses constructed for prison guards, wardens and other prison personnel.

As the fort of Skardu was fairly high up on the mountain, the military was experiencing difficulties. He built a new fort-like cantonment on the banks of the Satpara stream, in which the army was provided with every facility. He also built a prison-cell in this building that is still used for the same purpose. He built houses for other employees and people loyal to the government according to their needs, the government gardens had bowers and arcades constructed for the recreation of the population, and shops were built in the bazar in Skardu. He constructed factories for wool weaving all over the country. On the roads from Skardu to Sorad, Skardu to Stak, and Skardu to Khapulu, he constructed rest houses for travellers. He built cantonments in Shigar and Stak for the soldiers and houses for the

civilian employees. Large granaries were built by him in Skardu, Shigar and other suitable places.

A copper mine was discovered in Rondu and he immediately built facilities for the exploitation of the metal there. Antimony and mica were also discovered during his time, but did not prove lucrative enough for exploitation.

He founded many new settlements at different places, building modern villages that are settled to this day.

His treatment of the population was so gentle and fatherly that the author found some people who believed that he was a holy man sent by God.

In short, such a successful government officer could have no equal in Baltistan, and the author found to his great satisfaction that his descendants are still living with honour in Kishtwar.

After the ten-year rule of Mehta Mangal came Bhai Kanga Singh, followed by Rai Bahadar Pandit Radha Kishan Kaul, who in turn was followed by Lala Dhanpat Rai. Then came Syed Ghulam Jilani Shah followed by many other governors, details of whom could not be found out by the author. Then the system of governorship was stopped and Skardu was made into a tehsil under the Ministry for Frontier Affairs. Later on, his tehsil was administered from Ladakh. The summer and winter capitals of this administration were respectively in Ladakh and Skardu. Tangible developments took place during that time in Baltistan and the people who have seen these developments are alive today, so there is no need to describe them in detail.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PROPAGATION OF ISLAM IN BALTISTAN, POREG, GILGIT AND LADAKH

The propagation of Islam in his region is normally accredited to Hazrat Amir Kabir Syed Ali Hamadani, but no incidents are reported of his stay here. In the history of Kashmir, it is mentioned that Hazrat Amir Kabir came to Kashmir three times. In the time of the Delhi Sultan Shahabuddin (1320-1375 AD), Syed Hasan Bahadar bin Syed Tajuddin Behqi went to Kashmir at the wish of Hazrat Amir Kabir, so that he could find out the customs and traditions of the area. He came back and the Sultan Shahabuddin was so impressed by his capability that he conscripted him into his army.

Later, Amir Kabir Syed Ali Hamadani entered Kashmir during the final atack on Panjab by Shahabuddin. The brother of the Sultan, Qutubuddin was in Kashmir and was able to be of service to the holy man. After staying Kashmir for four months, the holy man left again for Hindustan. In 775 AH (1373 AD), he reached Sulanpur where the Sultan Shahabuddin served him. It was through the mediation of Amir Kabir Syed Ali Hamadani that a truce and reconcilliation occured between Feroz Shah Tughlak and Sultan Shahabuddin.

TThe second visit of this holy man to Kashmir was during the reign of Sultan Qutubuddin in 781 AH (1379 AD) This time, he was accompanied by seven hundred of his followers. Sultan Qutubuddin, who had lost a chance to serve the holy man during the reign of his brother, outdid himself in the respect he showed for the holy man. Hazrat Hamadani built himself a place for meditation and prayers at the bank of the river and near the setlement of Alauddinpura. His followers began to live a life of peace under the benevolent influence of the holy man and Qutubuddin. The Sultan Qutubuddin used to benefit greatly from the meetings with Syed Hamadani, and sincerely acknowledged the great man's authority. Once, the holy man gave the sultan his bracelet as a token, which the sultan always kept in his crown. After him, his future descendants used to keep it in the crown as well. Finally, Sultan Fateh Shah took the token with him to his grave in 1517, whereupon the Maulavi Mohammad Sahib (who was present at that time) prophesied: "Taj-i-Shahi az sare

Shahane Kashmir bara fated wa sardari an hama rabanagoisari nihad" (Tr. "The royal crown will fall from the heads of the kings of Kashmir, and their government will be overthrown."). The prophesy came true and the downfall of the kingdom started from that day onwards.

The third time the great Hazrat Amir Kabir Syed Hamadani visited Kashmir was in 785 AH (1382 AD), but he left shortly afterwards on a visit to Haryen Makphli, where there is a holy place. Here his soul left his body, which was buried in Hashltan.

Throughout the descriptions of the travels made by this holy man, there is no mention of his having gone to Baltistan. Nevertheless, oral traditions of his visit to Baltistan are prevalent. The author's friend Maulavi Syed Abbas of Chorkana has given an account of the propagation of Islam in this area. The Maulavi writes: "He (Syed Ali Hamadani) entered Kashmir with a staff in his hand, and busied himself with the propagation of Islam. Later he entered Skardu, where the hearts of the people turned towards Islam after listening to his speeches and advice and they finally accepted Islam. He constructed a mosque at Kharidong, which was the first mosque ever in Baltistan. He then constructed the Jamia mosque at Skardu for Friday prayers. Prayers were offered in this mosque upto the time of Raja Ali Shah, after which the site of the Friday prayers was changed to Kafchon."

"After doing all this in Skardu, Hazrat Amir Kabir went to Shighar to propagate the faith there, and raised the banner of Islam from Kothang to Braldo, from Neli to Basha. He also stayed in the village of Maborak and costructed the Maborak mosque there, which is the first mosque ever built in the whole of Shigar. It is said that his staff still is embedded in the dome of the mosque. After this, the mosque of Chehbarunji was constructed, and it is said the holy man himself wrote verses from the Muzzammil Surah (chapter) of the Quran on the inside of the walls, "Bismillah" (in the name of Allah) from the east door of the mosque and continued writing it till he had gone once round the mosque to reach the east door again. This writing is present to this day."

"During his sojourn in mosques here, the Syed wrote the books "Zakhira al Maluk" and "Kitab al maudat", both of which are with the religious scholars of Shighar to this day. The holy man spent a total of five years in the area between Shigar and Chorbat, afer which time he left the land for Srinagar."

History does not support the above incidents. It seems that some representative of Hazrat Amir Kabir or some of his students rendered services to Islam, resulting in later embellishments.

The dress of the people of Kashmir is also attributed to Hazrat Amir Kabir Syed Ali Hamadani. It is related that the people of Kashmir formerly used to wear the short shirts and loincloths or tight trousers worn all over Hindustan. On the desire of the holy man, the Sultan Qutubuddin changed this form of attire and adopted the Turkish dress. Instead of the existing short shirt and long gown, Hazrat Amir Kabir designed the long shirt. When the people saw the Sultan with the new dress, they rapidly adopted it and it survives in Kashmir to this day, being worn by Hindu and Muslim alike.

During the reign of the Sultan Sikandar, the son of this holy man, Syed Mir Mohammed Hamadani entered Kashmir at the age of twenty-two in 796 AH (1394 AD) with three hundred companions. He stayed in Kashmir for twenty-two years and Sultan Sikander accepted his spiritual authority. At the site where his father had prayed and meditated, the son built a mausoleum which still houses some relics of Hazrat Amir Kabir.

Despite Syed Mir Mohammad Hamadani's long stay in Kashmir, there is no written record of his having been in Baltistan. Hazrat Syed Nur Bakhsh must therefore have gone there.

Later on, Hazrat Mohammad Nur Bakhsh, who was a companion and student of Hazrat Amir Kabir Syed Ali Hamadani, went in place of the great man himself as his Khalifah to Baltistan, where he propagated the faith of Islam. Mention is made of this individual in the history of Kashmir, but no month and year is indicated. According to a book that the author procured from a mullah in Baltistan, his death is dated as 869 AH (1464 AD). On the basis of this, one can conjecture that this holy man came to Baltistan in 840-850 AH (1435-1445 AD). The tradition is that at the time of entry of Syed Nur Bakhsh into Baltistan, the rulers of the time were:

Ghotacosinge in Skardu
Ghazitham in Shigar
Shah Azam in Khapulu.

Hazrat Syed Mohammad Nur Bakhsh gave the whole country an invitation to accept Islam and accepted all conversions in the name of Hazrat Amir Kabir Syed Ali Hamadani. The result of this was that the people of the country began to convert to Islam, until the whole population

finally came within the pale of Islam. Ghazitham assumed the Islamic name of Ghazi Mir after his conversion. The mosques at Maborak and Chehbarunji, although attributed to Hazrat Amir Kabir, were in all probability the work of Hazrat Nur Bakhsh, during the reign of Ghazi Mir.

There is no mention of Skardu in the traditional stories of that time. It cannot be said with certainty what effect Islam had on Ghotecosinge. Anyway, the great Nur Bakhsh went to Shigar from Skardu and then to Khapulu. He stayed only a short time in Khapulu and propagated Islam there. The Raja of Khapulu accepted the religion of Islam, and Nur Bakhsh laid the foundations of the Jamia Mosque at Chakhchan. Thereafter, Nur Bakhsh left via the Saltoro stream for Yarqand, but not before he had converted the whole population of Baltistan to Islam.

Not much is known about his being in Poreg, but the fact that there are many of his followers in this area indicates that his influence on this area must have been considerable and he might even have been there. There is a Jamia Mosque in Poreg, which further points to the possibility that the great Nur Bakhsh may have also stopped here before he went to Skardu. Nevertheless, the founder of the Nur Bakhsh faith in Poreg was doubtless Hazrat Syed Mohammad Nur Bakhsh himself and his name is taken in Poreg even to this day with great respect.

Maulavi Syed Abbas has also attributed the authorship of the book "fiqah-i-ahawat" to Syed Nur Bakhsh, and has also claimed that he dedicated it to his son Shah Qasim Faiz Bakhsh, this book now being read by all his present followers; However, it can be determined from reliable facts that this book was written by Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi, who called himself the Khalifah (representative) of Hazrat Syed Nur Bakhsh.

During the reign of Sultan Hasan Shah (892 AH/ 1487 AD), Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi entered Kashmir from Khorasan, bearing many presents with him. He could not meet the sultan for the reason that the latter fell ill and lay on his death-bed. He took up residence in Kashmir. During the fueds between Mohammad Shah and Fateh Shah, he entered the services of the holy man called Baba Ismail, and became one of his murid (follower, acolyte). However, he was a believer of the Shia faith and soon converted his teacher to the faith. When Mohammad Shah came to the throne for the second time, Mir Shamsuddin felt homesick and went back to Khorasan after eight years (900 AH/1495 AD). He was, however, unable to stay in Khorasan and forced to go to Kashmir again. There he started propagating the Shia faith together with Baba Ali Bukhar. The people of Malik Musi, the village of Kajichak in

Rena and Ghazichak all became his followers and were very helpful in propagating his teachings.

When the holy man employed by Mohammad Shah heard about this he became very angry and had Mir Shamsuddin thrown out of Kashmir by force, banishing him to Skardu. The name of Mohammad Shah´s holy man was Syed Mohammad Bahaqi.

In Skardu, Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi claimed to be the Khalifah of Syed Mohammad Nur Bakhsh, as he knew that the people of Skardu were prepared to lay down their lives for the latter´s name. At that time, the Maqpon of Skardu was Bokha, Shigar was ruled by Gazri and Khapulu by Rai Behram; the ruler of Poreg was Habibco. The Mir was respected in all these places because he used the name of Syed Nur Bakhsh and was therefore successful in propagating his teachings. In this manner, he served this land for a period of five to six years. On learning of the death of Syed Mohammad Bahaqi in Kashmir, Mir Shamsuddin left for Kashmir in 908 AH (1502 AD).

It is possible that Ghotacosinghe or Behram had already accepted Islam from Syed Mohammad Nur Bakhsh, but the tradition about the son of Bokha, Sher Shah, is that he adopted the teachings of Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi. The same is probably also true for Shigar and Khapulu, but the teachings of Syed Mohammad Nur Bakhsh continued in Poreg uninterrupted.

According to tradition, two brothers by the names of Syed Nasir Tusi and Syed Ali Tusi entered Thaghas via the stream of Saltoro during the reign of either Yagbo Sekam or Yagbo Pambar alias Ibrahim. They were the followers of Syed Mohammad Nur Bakhsh, whose teachings they propagated. They constructed a small but highly exquisite mosque in Thaghas by the bank of the Saltoro stream. They remained in this mosque as long as they were in Thaghas. The mosque still exists in a state of disrepair, and the Mihrab (prayer-niche) has these words inscribed upon it: "wazir f´a Ibrahim man al-bait Ismail rabana taqaba mana ank ant al-masi´h al-´alim. tarix-i-ghaib."
This inscription proves that the mosque was built in 1012 AH (1603 AD).

After building this mosque and spreading Islam in Thaghas, these two holy men went to Shigar, where they did the same. The teachings of Syed Mohammad Nur Bakhsh were thus developed and expanded. They stayed for a time in Chotron and Dasoend; then Syed Nasir left for some place and nothing more was known of him. The people of Shigar believe that he disappeared on the mountain of Dasoend. His younger brother carried on the task of propagating the teachings of Nur Bakhsh, and finally died at the place known as Kwardo. His shrine is still there and is visited by all.

The time of the coming of these two holy men to Shigar to propagate the teachings of Islam was probably during the rule of some raja between the times of Abdullah Khan and Hasan Khan or the initial period of Raja Imam Quli Khan's rule.

The result of these concerted efforts was the spread of Islam in the whole country and no trace of the previous religion remained. The graves of these holy men and scholars are to be found everywhere and some of their descendants still live in many villages of the area.

In 840-850 AH (about 1435 AD), Syed Mohammad Nur Bakhsh laid the foundations of Islam in Sotchagtan and Pashkam, the foundations being later strengthened by his students and followers. The impact of this work are noticeable today, for the people of these areas are still devout followers of Nur Bakhsh.

Shigar-Shinghu and Dras were probably influenced by Islamic influences from Gilgit and Astor, since the people there are mostly Hanafi Sunni.

As no missionary went beyond Bodhkharbo, there is no influence of Islam there. The few Muslims in Ladakh are the result of influence by Kashmiri and Yarqandi traders. The most effective propagation was done by people who left their homes in Kashmir and Baltistan and spread the religion by their own example. This exemplary process continues today and is concentrated in the city of Ladakh and the surrounding countryside. A few villages in Nobrah are also thus influenced.

Islam spread in Zanskar through a Kashmiri trader named Razaq, who had been called over by Gyalpo Sange Namgyal to help his son Dechok Namgyal. Razaq settled in Zanskar and propagated the faith, as a result of which thirty to forty Muslim families live in two villages there and the faith is gradually spreading.

In Gilgit, tradition has it that the foundations of Islam there were laid in the time of Azru Shamsher (1120 AD), though he himself took little active interest in it after the conquest of Gilgit. Nevertheless, it was during his reign that six holy men, Syed Shah Baryadli, Syed Sultan Ali, Syed Shah Wali, Syed Shah Afzal, Syed Shah Akbar, and Syed Mir Ibrahim entered Gilgit. They proved to be true missionaries of Islam and converted the whole area from Buddhism to Islam. The mausoleums of these wise and holy men are to be found at different places in Gilgit and many good deeds are attributed to thesm.

Later, in the days of Trakhan, there was an invasion by the Mongols in 1290 from Badakhshan, and a new belief was introduced into Gilgit. The name of the new religion was Mughli, named after its founder, this name later being corrupted by common use into Maulai. Trakhan converted to this faith, and started proselytising it.

This new faith was introduced into Punial, Yasin, Chitral and Hunza through the influence of the Mongols, and it is still present in these areas at this time. The faith was not particularly successful in Gilgit proper, and at the time of the author's visit to Gilgit (in 1895 AD) only one family (the family of Raja Kamal Khan Nomal) was a believer of this faith.

The author was unable to determine the details of the beliefs embodied in the faith; all questions asked about it were not answered, and even the great Pir of Chitral said: "You must first enter the fold of our faith; after that, we will tell you all the details of what we believe in." The present leader of this sect is His Highness Sir Agha Khan, whose representative has been appointed for this area. Their organization is very good and regular.

Later on, Gilgit developed relations with Skardu as a result of the attacks of Ali Sher Khan Anchan, Raja of Skardu (1595-1633 AD), as well as the attacks of his grandson (SS) Sher Shah, Ali Shah, and Shah Murad (1660-1710 AD). As a result of this influence, the Raja of Gilgit, Mirza Khan (1565-1600 AD) adopted the Shia faith. In this way, the Shia faith was proselytised in the country, where it progressed fairly well. Reformers and scholars come from Skardu to Gilgit from time to time, although Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi himself never went to Gilgit. At the moment, these two faiths, i.e., Ahl-i-sunnat wa jam'at (a branch of the sunni sect of Islam) and Asna-i-'ashri (the religious term for the Shia sect in Islam) are prevalent in Gilgit. The people of Nagar are Shia, and the people below Gilgit along the Indus valley including the autonomous people of Chilas are all ahl-i-sunnat wa jam'at. The author found many scholars there of a very high standard of religious education and enlightenment. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the people of Kohistan are much better-mannered than the average villager in Hindustan.

The religious remains here are the mausoleums of the six holy men mentioned before, as well as those of the holy men that followed them. No other sign of early Islamic influence survives here. This appears to ensure that the culture of these people can never reach the heights reached in Baltistan, although efforts are being made to develop this region by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

POPULATION CENSUS OF TEHSIL SKARDU (BALTISTAN)

YEAR & AREA	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1873(approx) Skardu, Kargil & Zanskar	29881	28149	58030
1891(approx) only Skardu Tehsil	45126	41840	86966
1901(accurate) Haramosh only	302	293	595
rest of Skardu Tehsil	50024	49080	99104
Total of 1901 Census	50326	49373	99699

POPULATION CENSUS 1911 (Except Haramosh)

AREA	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Rondu	4953	4702	9655
Skardu	11083	10956	22039
Shigar	9182	8860	18042
Basha	2012	1814	3826
Braldo	1522	1613	3138
Parkuta	4303	4018	8321
Kiris	4361	4477	8837
Chorbat	2535	3071	5606
Khapulu	13276	14057	27333
GRAND TOTAL	53227	53568	106795

RECENT COMPREHENSIVE CENSUS (TEHSIL SKARDU)

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1921	51572	51173	102745
1931	54481	52996	107477

GENEALOGY OF THE MAQPON RAJAS OF SKARDU:

1. Ibrahim (Maqpon)	1190 - 1220
2. Astak Sange	1220 - 1250
3. Zak Sange	1250 - 1280
4. Bardak Sange	1280 - 1310
5. Sek Sange	1310 - 1340
6. Tam Gori Tham	1340 - 1370
7. Sa Gori Tham	1370 - 1400
8. Khokhor Sange	1400 - 1437
9. Ghota Cho Sange	1437 - 1464
10. Bahram Cho	1464 - 1490
11. Bo Kha	1490 - 1515
12. Sher Shah	1515 - 1540
13. Ali Khan	1540 - 1565
14. Ghazi Mir	1565 - 1595
15. Ali Sher Khan Anchan	1595 - 1633

15. Ali Sher Khan

17. Adam Khan (1635 - 1660) | 16. Abdal Khan Mi zos (1633 - 1634) | Ahmad Khan

Shah Murad (1660 - 1680) | Ali Shah (Rondu) | Sher Shah (Khartakhshah) | Shah Sultan (Astor) | Imam Quli

Mohammad Rafi Khan (1710 - 1745 (Approx.)) | Razi Khan | Daulat Khan | Bahram

21. Sultan Murad (1745 - 1760) (reign of Azam Khan Shighar (1780 - 1785))

22. Mohammad Zafar Khan (1785 - 1787)

23.Ali Sher Khan II (three wives)
1787 - 1800

first wife — second wife — third wife

24.Ahmad Shah (1800-1840) (contd) | Ghulam Shah(Parkuta) (contd) | Daulat Nasir (contd) | Azim Khan

Abdal Khan | Shahrukh | Sultan Mohammad Khan | Mohammad Ali Khan (Abbas Khan) | Mohammad Murad | Shah Mohammad

Shah Mohammad | Mohammad Shah | Rafi Khan | Mohammad Khan | Zafar Khan
(all at present residing in Shigri Bala, i.e.,upper Shigri)

Shah Sultan | Mohammad Ali Khan
(both at present residing in Skardu)

Genealogy of Ali Sher Khan II from his second wife (contd)

Daulat Nasir

Mohammad Khan

Ghulam Raza | Sultan Raza | Azim Khan

Mohammad Ali Khan | Ali Mardan Khan | Hassan Khan
(at present residing in Gamba Skardu) | (at present in Nandal)

Genealogy of Ali Sher Khan II from his third wife (contd)

Azim Khan

Amir Khan | Mardan Khan

Juman Khan | Ahmad Khan

Details of Ahmad Shah (1800 - 1840) - contd:

First wife: daughter of Daulat Ali Khan - Astor
Second wife:sister of Haider Khan -Shigar

Genealogy of Ahmad Shah from his first wife (i.e.Daughter of Daulat Ali Khan of Astor)

Shah Murad -no issue-
Daughter (wife of Ali Sher Khan of Kharmang)
25.Mohammad Shah(1840) (three wives)

Genealogy of Mohammad Shah from his first wife(daughter of Shah Sultan of Astor)

26.Ali Shah (two wives)

Genealogy of Ali Shah from his first wife (d/o Ali Sher Khan Kharmang)

27.Hassan Khan
Mohammad Shah
Shah Murad
Fazal Ali Khan
Mohammad Khan
28.Mohammad Ali Shah (now Raja of Skardu)
Hussain Ali Khan
Mohammad Ali Khan
Tasaddaq Hussain
Mohammad Sikandar

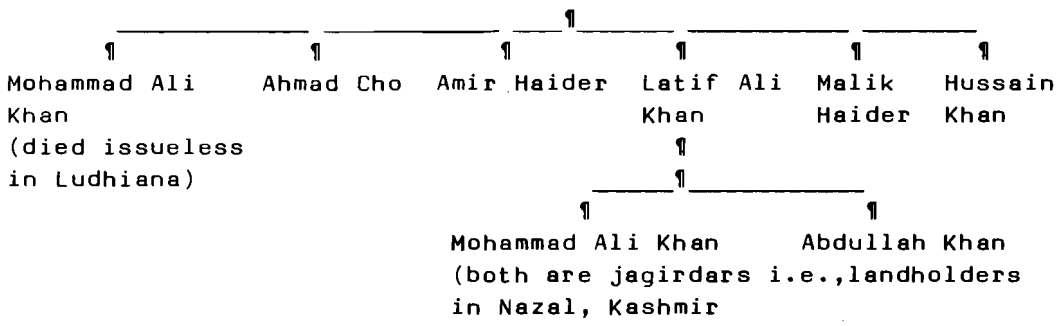
Genealogy of Mohammad Shah from his second wife(daughter of Zahid Khan)

Daughter(wife of Mahdi Ali Khan Malolti)

Genealogy of Mohammad Shah from his third wife(Balti)

Haider Ali Khan
Khair-al-Nisa
Syed Mohammad
Sadiq Shah
Mohammad Shah (Tehsildar in Kashmir)

Genealogy of Ahmad Shah (s/o Ali Sher Khan II) from his second wife(sister of Haider Khan of Shighar)



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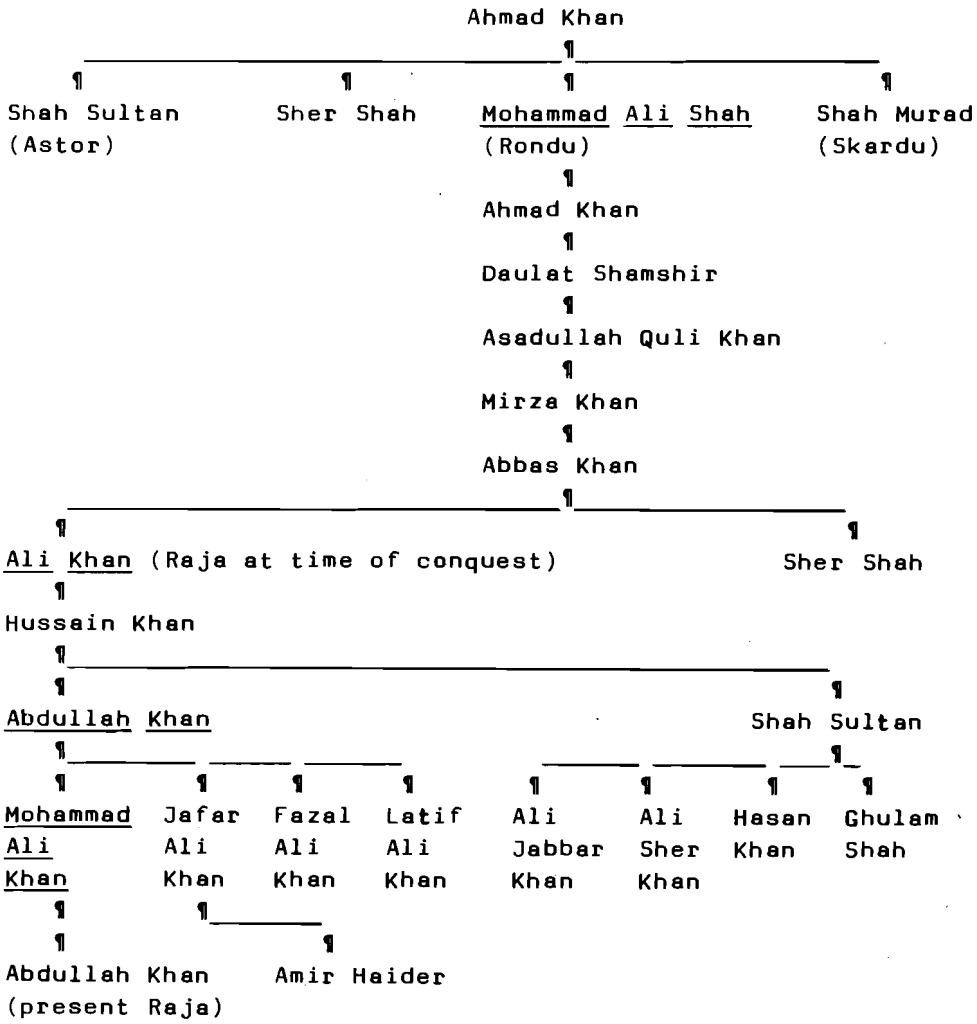
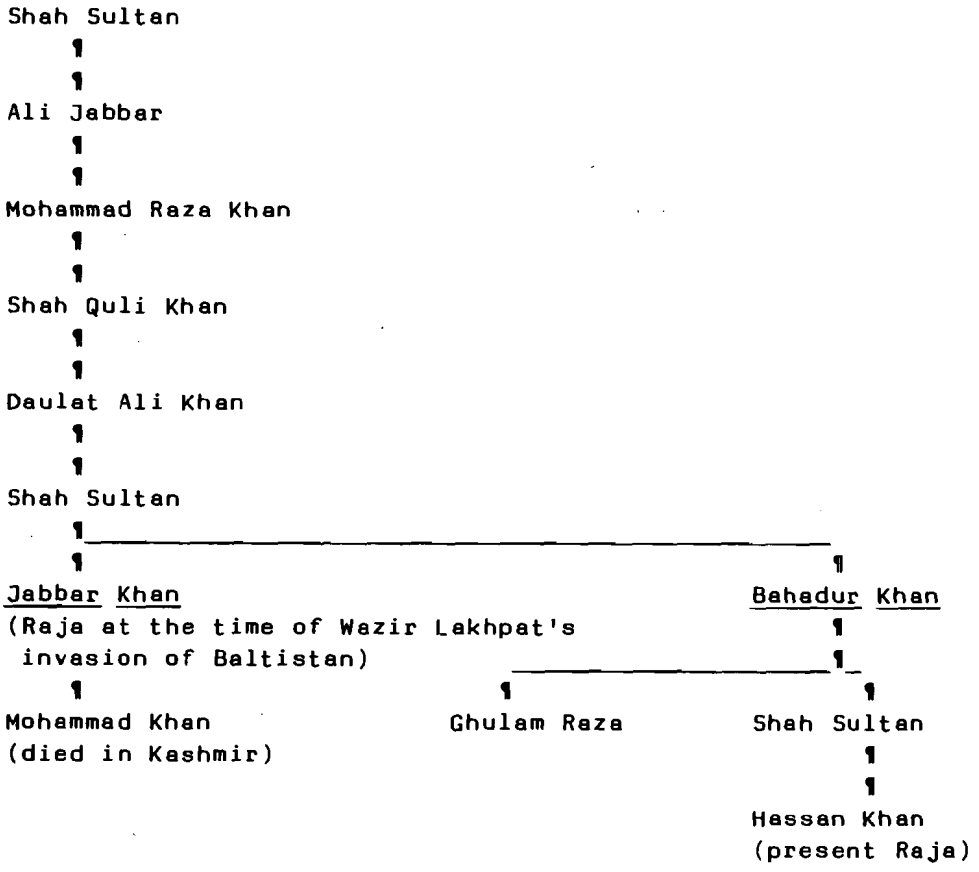
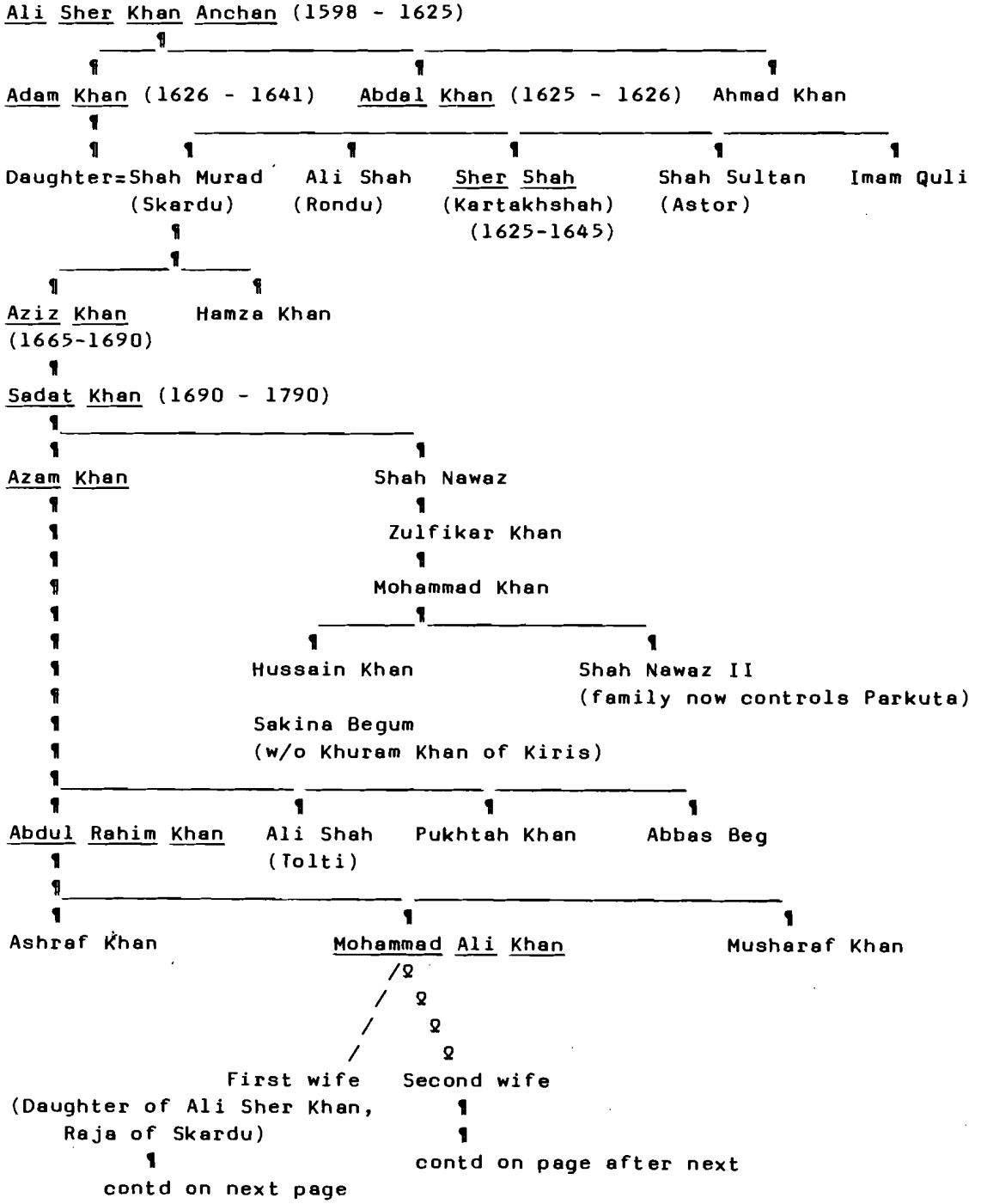
GENEALOGY OF THE RAJAS OF RONDU:



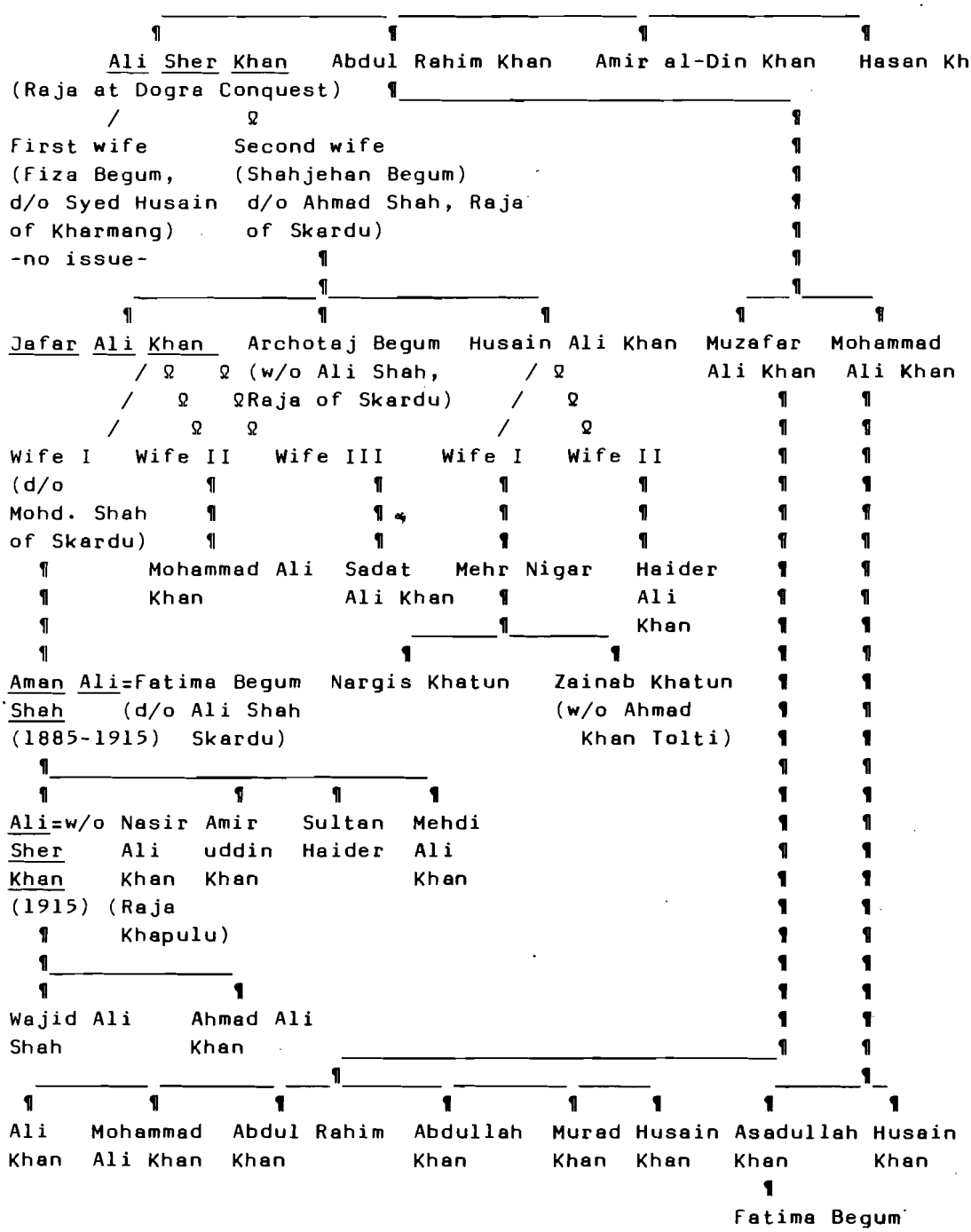
GENEALOGY OF THE RAJAS OF ASTOR:



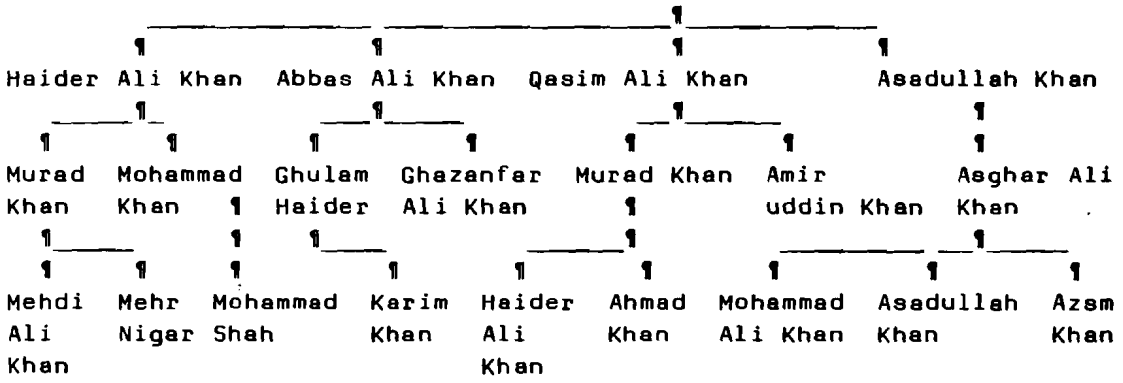
GENEALOGY OF THE MAQPON RAJAS OF KARTAKHSHAH (KHARMANG)



Descendants of Mohammad Ali Khan by his first wife (from previous page)

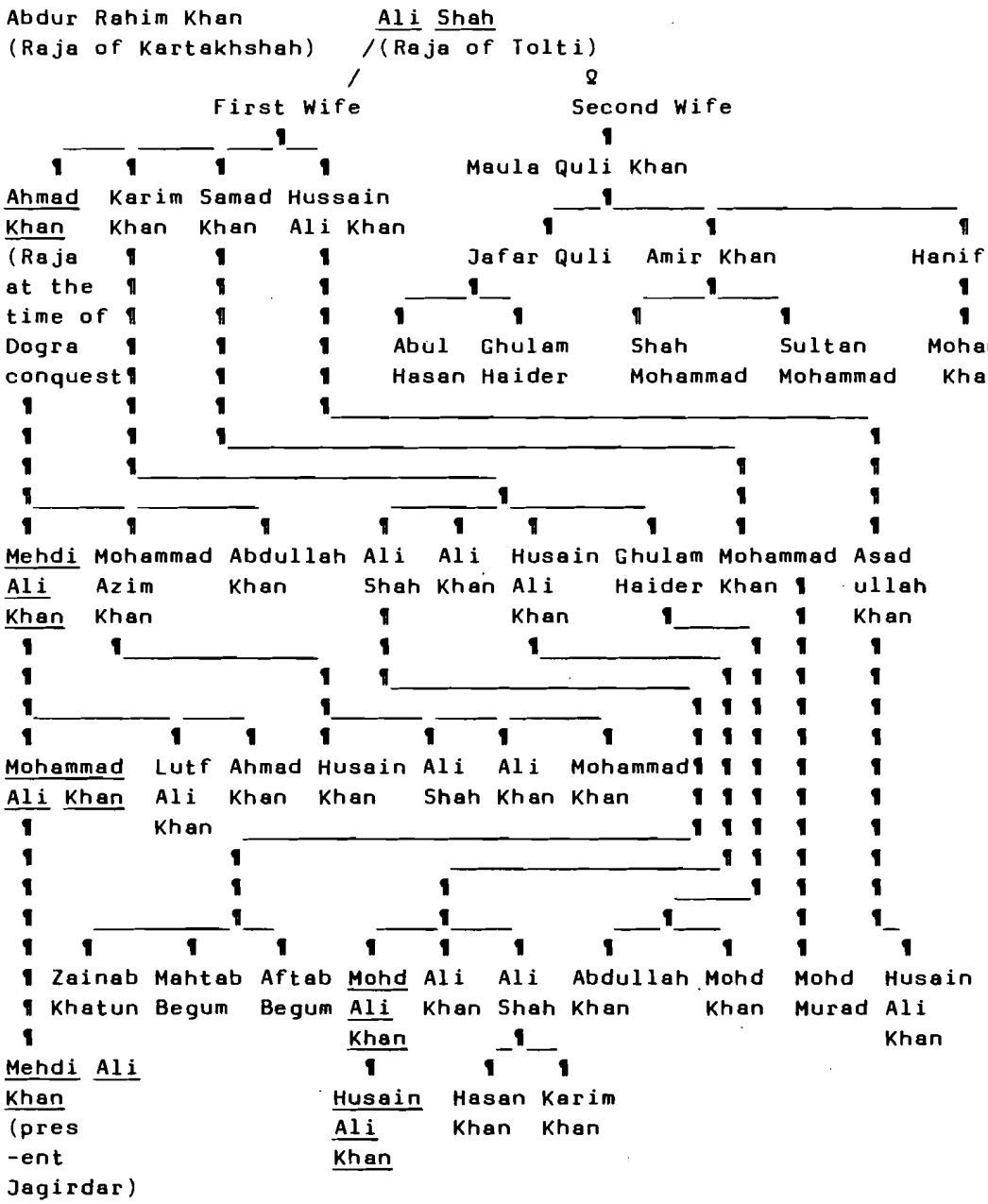


Descendants of Mohammad Ali Khan by his second wife (page before last)



GENEALOGY OF THE MAQPON RAJAS OF TOLTI:

Azam Khan (Raja of Kartakhshah 1720 - 1750)



GENEALOGY OF THE RULERS OF SHIGHAR:

ANCIENT DYNASTIES		THE EXISTING RULING HOUSE:	
1. Gyakhang	1. Chatham	11.Ghazitham (1440-1470)	
2. Gyapakhang	2. Bolgotham	12.Ali Mir (1470-1490)	
3. Tesecho	3. Yolgotham	13.Gazri (1490-1520)	
4. Yoqtham	4. Ramun	14.Abdullah Khan (1520-1535)	
5. Yoqtham	5. Pekarwin	15.Haider Khan	)
			)
6. Sher Khang	6. Ram	16.Hamid Khan	)
			)
7. Markhang	7. Razitham	17.Rozi Khan	} 1535-1633)
			)
8. Chakhang	8. Aitham	18.Sultan Khan	)
			)
9. Chapakhang	9. Tanzantham	19.Mohammad Khan)	
10.Sher Batan Mshed	10.Goritham	20.Hasan Khan (1633-1635)	

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20. Hasan Khan (No.20 above right)

21. Hassam Quli Khan

22. Imam Quli Khan (1635-1705)

First wife (sister of Amir Khan of Kiris)

Second wife (Ghasoapa)

23. Azam Khan (1705-1784)

Ali Khan (1787-1789)

24. Suleman Khan (1784-1787)

Hussain Khan

Majid Khan

Amir Khan

Mirza Khan

GENEALOGY OF THE RAJAS OF KHAPULU(ACCORDING TO RAJA ALI SHER KHAN, CHIEF AND JAGIRDAR OF KHAPULU)

1.Sultan Sikandar-i-Azam
2.Sultan Ibrahim
3.Sultan ishaq.
4.Sultan Abdurrahimad.
5.Mir Brahir.
6.Arman Samahir.
7.Beshrab Nam
8.Tumlotang.
9.Sultan Mahmud Mir Ghazi.
10.Sultan Mehdi Ghazali
11.Mehdi Ibrahim.
12.Malik Haider Shah
13.Sultan Malik Ghazi
14.Sultan Malik Shah
15.Sultan Junaid Shah
16.Haider Shah
17.Haider Karar
18.Shah Ibrahim
19.Sultan Johar Fani
20.Najm-ul-Mulk
21.Malik Rustam.
22.Mehdi mir.
23.Malik Mir.
24.Malik Jabbar.
25.Sadullah Khan
26.Sa'd Qaron Beg
27.Sa'd Jalil Khan
28.Sa'd Rustam Beg.
29.Ataullah Khan
30.Sa'd Jalil Khan
31.Sa'd Yaqub Khan
32.Sa'd Mir Ghazi
33.Sa'd Malik Parnor.
34.Sa'd Babar Malik
35.Sa'd Muhkam Khan
36.Sa'd Shah Azim Beg
37.Sa'd Gohar Beg.
38.Sa'd Malik Shah Shuja
39.Sultan Yagbo
40.Yagbo Latif Beg.
41.Yagbo Sher Ghazi
42.Yagbo Ahmad Ghazi
43.Yagbo Nur Ghazi
44.Yagbo Alamgir Ghazi
45.Yagbo Bewancho.
46.Yagbo Hal Ghazi
47.Yagbo Sher Ghazi.
48.Yagbo Beg Mantar.
49.Yagbo Turab Khan
50.Sultan Salmonde.
51.Sultan Brolde.
52.Sultan Malik Hal.
53.Sultan Arzona.
54.Sultan Bekam.
56.Sultan Korkor.
57.Sultan Behram.
58.Sultan Sekam
59.Sultan Mir Khan
60.Sultan Ibrahim
61.Sultan Ghazi Mir Cho.
62.Sultan Hussain Khan
63.Sultan Rahim Khan
64.Sultan Hatim Khan
65.Sultan Daulat Ali Khan
66.Sultan Mohammad Ali Khan
67.Sultan Yahya Khan
68.Sultan Daulat Ali Khan
69.Sultan Mohammad Ali Khan
70.Sultan Hatim Khan.
71.Sultan Nasir Ali Khan

GENEALOGY OF THE YAGBO RAJAS OF KHAPULU(ACCORDING TO COMMON TRADITION AND THE AUTHOR'S OWN RESEARCH):

1.Beg Manthal (fn.1)
2.Tekam Beg
3.Mahmud Mazdkali
4.Sultan Mehd Ghazali
5.Malik Ghoshali
6.Malik Shah
7.Junaid Shah
8.Haider Kawar
9.Malik Mir
10.Jur Khane
11.Alam Malik
12.Rustam Malik
13.Malik Mir
14.Malik Jabbar
15.Mehdi Mir
16.Jalil Beg
17.Rustam Beg
18.Tulab Khan
19.Muqim Khan
20.Shah Azam Khan (fn.2)
21.Nur Ghazi
22.Alamgir Ghazi
23.Asi Ghazi
24.Yagbo Barat Khan
25.Yagbo Salim De (fn.3)
26.Yagbo Broldę
27.Yagbo Malik Bal
28.Yagbo Azro (fn.4)
29.Yagbo Begum (fn.5)

Author's Note: It is possible that the sequence of the names is correct but cannot be a father-to-son sequence. e.g., it is not possible to have nine generations pass by in a short space of 40-50 years,as this time period has nine names indicated betw. Shah Azam and Yabgo Behram (Nos.20-30) (genealogy continued on next page.)

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1 Approximately in 850 AD.
2 Converted to Islam 1420-1450
3 1450-1475
4 1475-1495
5 1485-1494.

Continued from previous page:

29. Yagbo Begum

30. Yagbo Korkor (1494-1550) — Yabgo Behram

31. Yagbo Sekam (1550-1590)

32. Yagbo Ibrahim Khan Salang (1590-1605)

Yagbo Beg Aman alias Bewan Cho (Kiris)

1. Yagbo Turab Khan (Khapulu and Chorabat) (1590-1600)

33. Yagbo Sher Ghazi (1605 - 1620)

2. Yagbo Mir Khan (1600-1615)

34. Yagbo Rahim Khan (1620 - 1630)

Argyal Khatun (w/o Jamiang Namgyal of Ladakh)

3. Yagbo Hussain Khan (1615-1640) married to Haya Khatun, sister of Murad Shah)

Hamza Khan (married to Lyo, d/o Bewan Cho)

35. Yagbo Hatim Khan (Salang & Khapulu) (1630-1690)

Azam Khan

4. Yagbo Babar (1640 - 1685)

5. Yabgo Yaqub

Ahmad Mir (Kiris branch)

36. Yagbo Dabla Khan (1690 - 1725)

37. Yagbo Mohammad Ali Khan (1725 - 1760)

37. Yagbo Mohammad Ali Khan

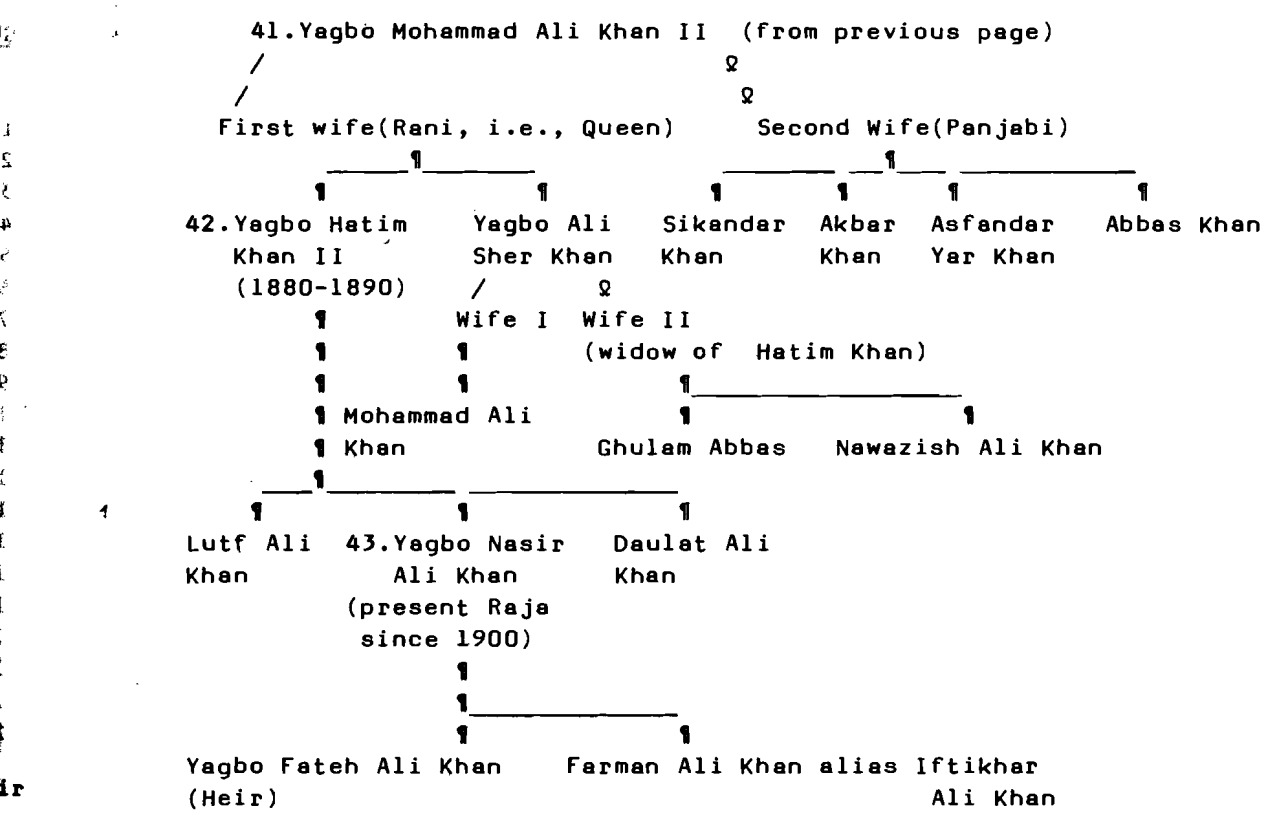
38. Yagbo Yahya Khan

40. Yagbo Daulat Ali Khan (1840-1860)

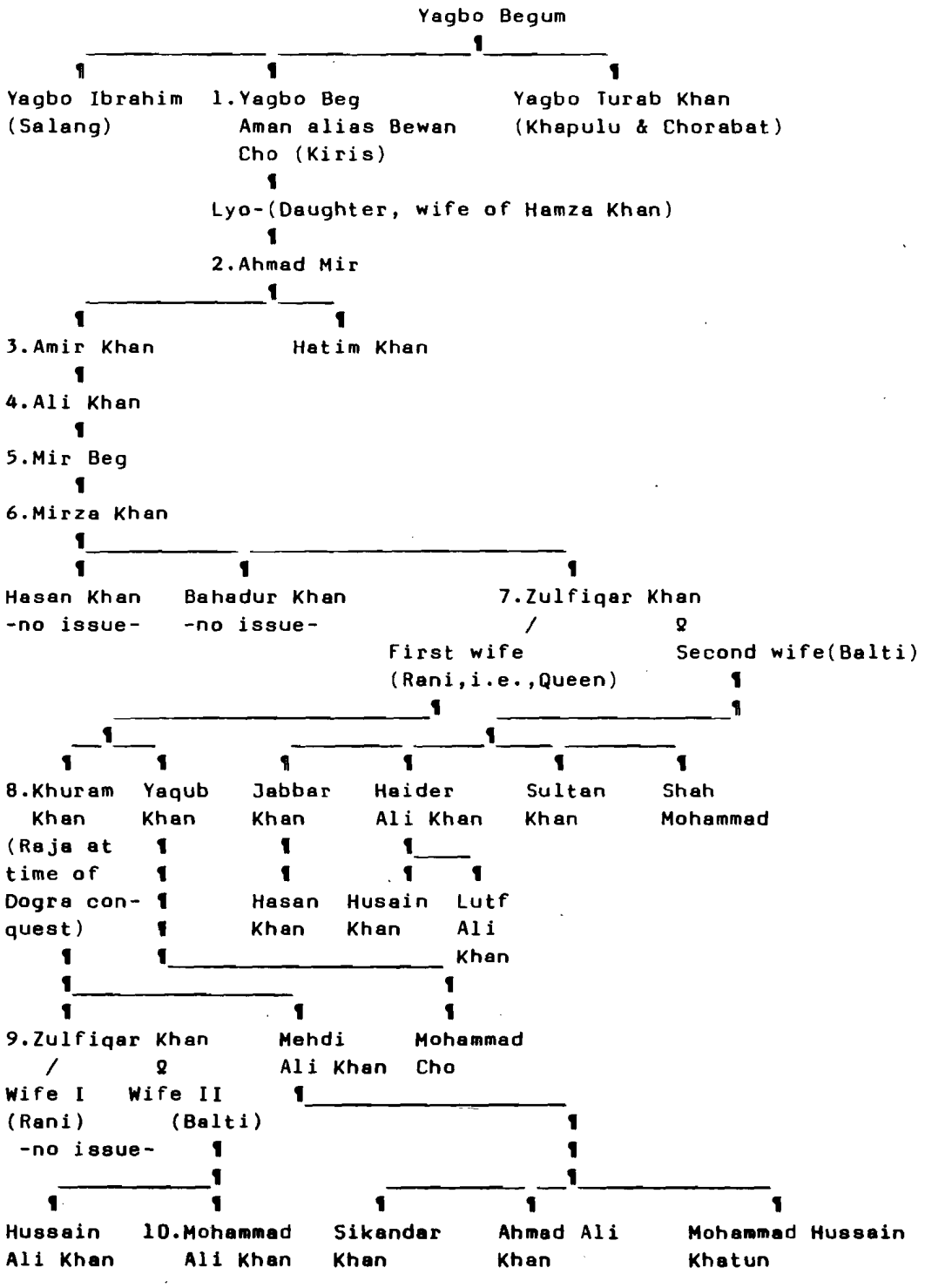
39. Yagbo Mahmud Shah alias Mehdi Ali Khan (1810-1820)

Mohammad Khan

(contd on next page)


41.Yagbo Mohammad Ali Khan II (from previous page)
First wife(Rani, i.e., Queen)
Second Wife(Panjabi)
42.Yagbo Hatim Khan II (1880-1890)
Yagbo Ali Sher Khan
Sikandar Khan
Akbar Khan
Asfandar Yar Khan
Abbas Khan
Wife I
Wife II (widow of Hatim Khan)
Mohammad Ali Khan
Ghulam Abbas
Nawazish Ali Khan
Lutf Ali Khan
43.Yagbo Nasir Ali Khan (present Raja since 1900)
Daulat Ali Khan
Yagbo Fateh Ali Khan (Heir)
Farman Ali Khan alias Iftikhar Ali Khan

GENEALOGY OF THE RAJAS OF KIRIS (OF THE YABGO BRANCH OF KHAPULU)



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This is a translation of a history in Urdu by a Muslim scholar, Hashmatullah Khan, who served the Dogra regime as the Wazir-i-Wazarat (Administrator) of Baltistan. Written in 1939, this history is the only one available on Baltistan. The major written record upon which the writer bases his history is the Shigar-Namah, a handwritten Persian manuscript found in the Shigar valley. He has freely used folk poetry, epics and other oral traditions to fill gaps in the history, thus showing the great importance of oral history to corroborate and supplement written sources. As such, it is a good example of Islamic scholarship in Urdu.